



THE INDEPENDENT

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7 NOVEMBER
1997

TODAY'S NEWS

Bank raises rates yet again

The Bank of England annoyed business, caught the financial markets unawares and brought the next rise in mortgage costs a bit closer yesterday when it increased interest rates to their highest level for five years. But the ritual complaints could not disguise the fact that the Bank's move under the new arrangements was a gentle application of the economic brakes. The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee pushed interest rates a quarter point higher to 7.25 per cent yesterday, the fifth increase since 1 May. The cost of borrowing is now at its highest since the aftermath of the exchange rate crisis in 1992.

Even so, the big lenders held off increasing mortgage rates yesterday after the Nationwide and the Bradford and Bingley, the two biggest remaining mutual building societies, flung the gauntlet down to their competitors by promising to keep their loan rates unchanged at just under 8 per cent for now.

Brian Davis, chief executive of the Nationwide, said: "We can afford to let borrowers enjoy Christmas." But he warned that the society would probably have to follow the Bank of England's lead if it raises rates again in the New Year.

Many City analysts were surprised by yesterday's move because they had expected the recent stock-market turbulence to delay the rise in rates. Some reckoned, too, that policy was already tight enough to slow the economy to a steadier pace.

But the Bank's statement concluded another "modest" move was needed to keep underlying inflation on course for 2.5 per cent. It said the economy had been growing at an unsustainable rate.

Business reaction to yesterday's increase ranged from "slightly disappointed" to "concerned". Andrew Higginson, chair of the British Retail Consortium's economics committee, said: "It was a rise too far." There was no sign of overheating on Britain's high streets, he said.

The CBI expressed regret about the Bank's decision, but chief economist Kate Barker acknowledged that the tight jobs market did raise concerns about future inflation pressure. The Bank's announcement pointed to evidence of skill shortages as one reason for its decision.

The loudest complaints came from exporters, alarmed that high interest rates are keeping the pound painfully strong. Graham Mackenzie, director general of the Engineering Employers' Federation, said: "Exporters, already suffering reduced margins and loss of market share, will continue to be hurt."

— Diane Coyle, Economics Editor
City reaction, page 22

Smog at 3-year high

Britain's biggest cities have been experiencing smog just as bad as that in Paris last month when public transport was free and half the cars were forced off the road. Experts say the past few days have seen the dirtiest and most dangerous pollution for three years. Yet the Government has issued no warning. Page 7

Isaiah Berlin dies

Sir Isaiah Berlin, Fellow of All Souls, Oxford, the celebrated philosopher, historian, diplomat and political theorist, has died. He was 88. One of the most brilliant scholars of his generation, he has been described as Britain's greatest thinker. He was also a compelling speaker, and an amusing raconteur.

Page 5; Obituary, page 18

Bentley to be cleared

More than four decades after being hanged for the murder of a policeman during a bungled robbery, Derek Bentley is likely to be cleared of murder posthumously. It is a considerable victory for the Bentley family.

Page 6

SEEN & HEARD

He may be the very embodiment of an American Christmas, but the cheery, white-bearded, red-suited man is past it. Toys 'R' Us, America's largest toy retailer, is ditching Santa Claus, the New York Post said. He will no longer appear on their catalogues or stores this year. Instead, they are taking Christmas into the information age. References to Santa are being replaced with a toy age. "Dear Santa" letters and dropping them off at stores, children can use hand-held scanners to register for toys.

WEATHER The Eye, page 30
TELEVISION The Eye, page 32
CROSSWORD Page 30 and the Eye, page 29
Web address: <http://www.independent.co.uk>

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Best of Blair's Britain? Images and icons meant to impress the French today



Bienvenue à la jeune Grande-Bretagne de Tony Blair! British-French summits generally take place in the oak-panelled and gilded silence of old country houses, like Ditchley Park in Oxfordshire, or at the equally traditional and splendid Lancaster House in London.

Mr Blair has ordered a change of tack, however. In keeping with his "young Britain" rhetoric, today's meeting with

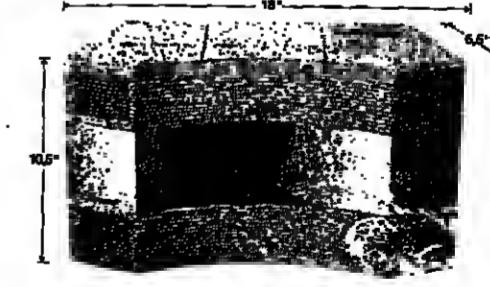
the French Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, is being held on the 38th floor of the huge Canary Wharf tower in London's Docklands development.

It is not only home to newspapers like *The Independent*, the *Mirror* and the *Daily Telegraph*, but is generally considered an ambiguous monument to the Thatcher years. The Prime Minister, however, likes it for its breezily forward

looking atmosphere and has had the empty floor of the stainless steel tower fitted out with showcase examples of new British design, art, furniture and textiles especially for the occasion. The idea is to show the French that the British now do it just as well, if not better. Here Sir Terence Conran, the restaurateur and style guru, sits surrounded by glimpses from the summit rooms.

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2/BRIEFING

COLUMN ONE

Shadow of Guinness curse looms again

The curse of the House of Guinness may be about to strike again. On the eve of publication of a long-awaited history of the Distillers' scandal by Lord Moyne, otherwise known as Jonathan Guinness of the Irish brewing dynasty, an investment company which he controls has been suspended by the Swedish stock exchange.

The Serious Fraud Office is now set to probe the affairs of Trustor, the Swedish based investment company in which the Tory peer acquired a controlling stake last June.

An investigation by the Fraud Intelligence Branch of the Swedish police in Stockholm has already begun into the alleged disappearance of £49m from the company's assets. The Swedish authorities have asked the SFO to establish whether funds were transferred from Sweden to an account in London, and if so to find where the money has gone since.

Sources at the SFO said that it would be able to deploy its special powers under section two of the Criminal Justice Act to try and follow the movement of the money. As a result of the "serious allegations", the Swedish stock exchange suspended trading in Trustor shares.

The investigation could not be worse timed for Lord Moyne (left) with the imminent publication of *Requiem for a Family Business*, his insider's account of the Distillers-Guinness takeover battle in the 1980s.

In the book, Lord Moyne, 67, a non-executive of the Guinness drinks group from 1961 to 1988, is set to reopen some old wounds.

He is unlikely, however, to criticise too strongly the actions of disgraced former Guinness chairman Ernest Saunders, who

is still on friendly terms with the peer and was allowed to see a draft manuscript of the book.

Lord Moyne is the eldest son of Lady Diana Mitford and the stepson of the British fascist leader Sir Oswald Mosley.

A former chairman of the Monday Club, the right-wing pressure group, his previous publications include *Shoe: The Odyssey of a Sixties Survivor*.

Lord Moyne's Scandinavian business ambitions have not been confined to Sweden. In July, he tried unsuccessfully to gain control of the Finnish sports company, Amer, which owns the famous Wilson brand.

He had been virtually unknown in the region until this summer when he spent around £20m to obtain a 52 per cent share of Trustor.

Despite being normally outspoken, he is declining to comment on the Swedish investigation. His publisher said yesterday that he was out of the country but expected to return to Britain today. The Old Etonian admits he lacks the business acumen of some of his Guinness forefathers – he once sold a Gainsborough portrait because it was "pushed" for cash – and has an interesting view on why the Distillers' scandal was allowed to happen. "The City got too lax. Distillers thought we were still gentlemen. Unfortunately, they had another think coming," he said in August.

No doubt, he will be hoping that the authorities will be suitably rigorous in attempting to discover what happened to the Trustor millions.

— Ian Burrell

PEOPLE



Bob Marley who was elevated to the world stage by Chris Blackwell (inset)

Music boss Blackwell leaves his beloved Island

Chris Blackwell, the founder of Island Records and one of the legendary names in British music, is leaving the label, now owned by multinational company PolyGram.

In a terse statement issued last night PolyGram announced "the termination of the agreement under which Mr Blackwell's services were provided to the music and film operations of PolyGram's Island Entertainment Group". A spokeswoman said there would be no further comment.

Industry sources were speculating that the marriage of a multinational company and a supremely talented individual had proved a difficult one, and 60-year-old Mr Blackwell will now concentrate on his chain of hotels in Miami and Jamaica.

Mr Blackwell founded Island Records in 1962 after selling Jamaican records from the boot of his car.

He championed music from Jamaica for the rest of his career, most notably the reggae star Bob Marley, who died of cancer in 1981. He became a close friend of the Marley family. But Marley was not alone among Island's landmark signings. The Spencer Davis

Group with Stevie Winwood in the Sixties, Free in the Seventies and U2 in the Eighties and beyond, alongside Britpop idols Pulp as well as The Cranberries, were all signed to Island.

PolyGram bought Island Records in 1989 for \$272m (£165m), keeping Mr Blackwell on as chairman of Island Entertainment Group.

Alain Levy, president and chief executive of PolyGram said in a statement issued in New York last night that Mr Blackwell would also be leaving the board of management of PolyGram. He added: "Mr Blackwell's departure will not affect the status of Island as a stand-alone unit within the PolyGram group of labels." A company spokesman refused to comment on rumours that Mr Blackwell had received \$20m in severance pay.

Mr Blackwell was not available for comment last night. Writers at *Music Week*, the weekly journal of the music industry, described him yesterday as one of the most significant figures operating in the record company world in the last half century.

— David Lister, Arts News Editor

Editor cleared of incitement to kill birds

A claim that the editor of an ageing newspaper incited readers to kill cormorants, a protected species, was thrown out of court yesterday after magistrates decided there was no case to answer.

Keith Higginbottom, 39, former editor of the *Angling Times*, denied two charges under the Countryside and Wildlife 1981 Act that his edition of 4 December 1996 would encourage the killing of cormorants.

The edition which led to the charges being brought carried the headline "These birds must be killed" opposite a picture of a masked, armed man – and four dead cormorants. The prosecution

alleged that it contained 13 specific messages about the need to kill cormorants.

Mr Kelly said the prosecution was an "absolute waste of money".

"The decision to bring [the case] at all has to be questioned as it was a serious challenge to journalistic independence and free speech which is the hallmark of a democratic and free country."

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alleged that it contained 13 specific messages about the need to kill cormorants.

Keith Saunders, of the League Against Cruel Sports, said: "When we saw the article we were very worried about it and we were certain it was a clear incitement to people to kill a protected species.

The outcome is very disappointing and we just hope people are more responsible in the future."

An RSPCA spokeswoman added: "These birds are protected and even if someone believes they are causing a problem, it is not up to any individual to decide what should be done."

— Kevin Black, RSPCA

Editor cleared of incitement to kill birds

Louise Woodward should spend at least 15 years in prison for killing baby Matthew Eappen, his mother said yesterday.

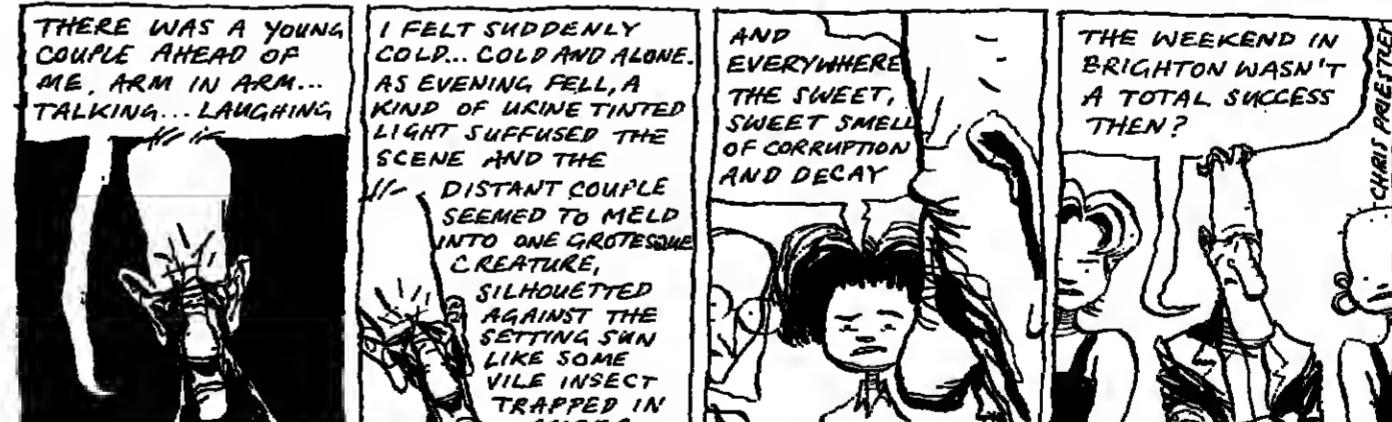
Deborah Eappen, who said she planned to become a child protection campaigner, added that she felt no sympathy for Woodward. "The life expectancy of a baby boy born in 1996 is 80 years. For her

to serve less than 15 years for killing Matthew is unfair," she said.

Dr Eappen, who carries a photograph of her son taken when he was dying in hospital, was speaking to the *New York Daily News* as the 19-year-old couple waits to hear if the judge will overturn her conviction, or reduce it to manslaughter, or order a retrial.

— Deborah Eappen, mother of Matthew Eappen

7.30 FOR 8



ZITS



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UPDATE

ENVIRONMENT

Pollution curbs could save 8 million

A global effort to cut air pollution by reducing the burning of coal, oil and other fossil fuels could prevent eight million deaths worldwide over the first 20 years of the next century, scientists say.

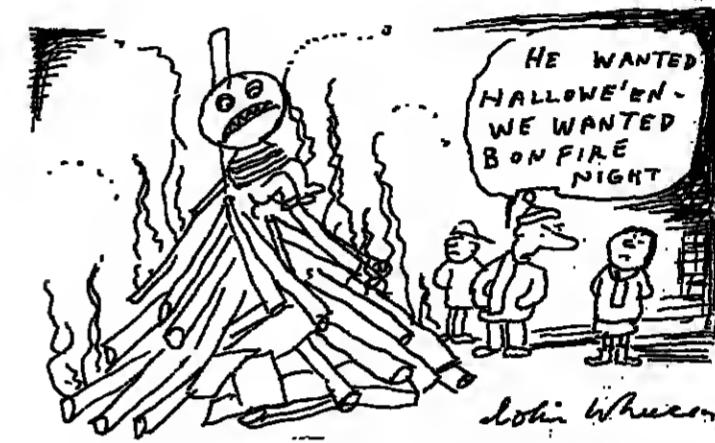
The Working Group on Public Health and Fossil Fuel Combustion, an interdisciplinary body funded by the US Environmental Protection Agency, compared two future scenarios to assess the likely effects of greenhouse gas emissions on global health. In one, dubbed "Business-as-Usual", they assumed trends in energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions would continue unchanged. In the other, they assumed European Union agreed targets for a 15 per cent reduction in CO2 emissions for developed countries below their 1990 level by 2010 would be met. Similar targets for developing countries require them to cut their emissions by 10 per cent below what they would otherwise be in 2010.

The group say in the *Lancet* that 700,000 avoidable deaths will occur annually by 2020 as a result of exposure to additional particulate matter pollution under the Business-as-Usual forecast compared with the EU-backed climate policy scenario.

— Jeremy Laurance, Health Editor

LEISURE

Firework sales lose their spark



Bonfire Night could be losing its appeal due to new legislation banning the sale of fireworks to under-18s and the increasing popularity of US-style Hallowe'en celebrations.

Howard Garman, of Celebration Fireworks, said: "Initial figures show that sales are down 73 per cent on last year. That is quite a big drop for us but other people are likely to be well below that figure, probably 65 per cent is a true figure across the country." Ron Rapley, of Standard Fireworks, also said that sales this year had been disappointing.

Some manufacturers believe that 5 November celebrations are being muted because more people are putting their energies into Hallowe'en. Hamleys toy shop, in central London, said that it had sold more monster masks, costumes and other paraphernalia this year than ever before.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Water companies making progress

The performance of water companies continues to improve. Ian Byatt, Director General of the industry watchdog Ofwat, said yesterday.

Companies were measured on how they deal with supply failures, metered bills, response to billing contracts, customer complaints, water pressure and in some cases, sewer flooding. Mr Byatt said: "I am glad to report that the overall performance of the companies continues to improve. This reflects changes in operational procedures and, in relation to pressure problems and sewer flooding, the use of efficiency savings to finance additional investment. For some companies, however, aspects of their service are below that which customers might reasonably expect. In these cases I have asked the company concerned to tell me its plans for improvement. In some cases I have asked the company to set targets for improvements."

TOURIST RATES

Australia (dollars)	2.32	Italy (lira)	2754
Austria (schillings)	19.67	Japan (yen)	203.7
Belgium (francs)	57.78	Malta (lira)	0.62
Canada (\$)	2.29	Netherlands (guilders)	3.15
Cyprus (pounds)	0.82	Norway (kroner)	11.51
Denmark (kroner)	10.72	Portugal (escudos)	284.2
France (francs)	9.36	Spain (pesetas)	235.6
Germany (marks)	2.80	Sweden (kroner)	12.31
Greece (drachmai)	443.4	Switzerland (francs)	2.29
Hong Kong (\$)	12.58	Turkey (lira)	294,906
Ireland (pounds)	1.08	USA (\$)	1.64

Source: Thomas Cook

Rates for indication purposes only

1000 150

3/LEADING STORIES

Newshuttle presenter gets blame in opera fiasco

The Culture Secretary Chris Smith has given his junior minister Mark Fisher a dressing down over remarks made on BBC's *Newshuttle* programme. Mr Smith tells our arts news editor, David Lister, that it's all the fault of that hectoring Kirsty Wark.

An interview on BBC 2's *Newshuttle* programme has led to public embarrassment for the government's culture ministers. Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, has hauled his hitherto failsafe arts minister Mark Fisher over the coals for saying on programme that the government had already decided the future of the Royal Opera House.



Kirsty Wark gave Mark Fisher the last word

Mr Fisher's statement was embarrassing for both Mr Smith and Sir Richard Eyre, the former director of the National Theatre, whom Mr Smith has asked to head a review body on the ROH's future.

But with commendable frankness Mr Smith excused his junior by telling *The Independent* that Mr Fisher had been "under pressure from two antagonistic fellow interviewees and a rather hasty and pressing Kirsty Wark."

Mr Smith's oblique tribute to Ms Wark — namely that she can reduce an experienced politician to blurt out inexactitudes — should confirm her

Paxmanesque qualities for any who may have doubted them.

A BBC spokesman said last night: "This is rather a bizarre excuse. Kirsty actually gave Mark Fisher the last word. He had lashings of time to make his points. Kirsty is one of our top presenters and very experienced. She doesn't cut people short."

Mr Smith said yesterday: "Mark was wrong in what he said on *Newshuttle* and has been told very severely by me that he was wrong. I have been very clear in saying my proposals were proposals and not a *fait accompli*. My purpose, more than anything else, is to shock even more into thinking seriously about the issue."

"I have said to Mark very clearly you should not have said that" and he said, "I know, I know. As soon as it was over I knew I'd said the wrong thing."

Mr Fisher has been Labour's arts spokesman during the Nineties, the main spokesman in opposition before the 1992 election and after that a number two. He said on *Newshuttle* on Tuesday: "We have asked him [Sir Richard Eyre] to look at our plan. If he can come up with some improvement on it, well and good ... Let's see what he comes up with, but we are convinced that he supports our plan and will make it work."

It is understood that this was badly received by Sir Richard Eyre, who is heading the Government's review and was under the impression he would be delivering his own conclusions, not rubber stamping a government decision that the Royal Opera House become a receiving House and the English National Opera leave the London Coliseum and perform there as equal partners with the Royal Opera and Royal Ballet.

Yesterday Sir Richard sent an open letter on the subject to all interested parties in which he says: "Your views on [Mr Smith's proposal] would be welcome, but I will explore other options and you should not feel constrained from offering views on different ways forward..."



Antony Worrall Thompson: 'Prison food is very monotonous. There's no imagination involved. It's just stodge'

Photograph:

Could you feed desperate men on £1.52 a day?

The daily diet of an inmate in one of Britain's jails costs just £1.52. Benjamin Todd examines a new report on the quality of prison catering and asks a leading chef to devise an alternative menu.

Meal times are a "potential flash point" in Britain's prisons with poor quality food causing disturbances and violence, according to a report published today. But food can also provide a vital method of maintaining order.

The study examined how prison cooks coped with having only £1.52 to spend on providing prisoners with three meals a day. It concludes that most of the food was "acceptable".

The *Independent*, however, has obtained the services of restaurateur and television chef, Antony Worrall Thompson, who considers the jail menus dull and monotonous. For the same money he has devised a special menu that in-

A TASTE OF TWO MENUS

A sample prison menu

Breakfast
One boiled egg or cereal or porridge. Two pieces of toast, 1 sachet of margarine and 1 sachet of marmalade

Lunch
Macaroni cheese or individual quiche or sausage roll with one type of potato (boiled, jacket, roasted or chips) and one type of seasonal vegetable (e.g. peas, or carrots). Sometimes followed by a bun.

Tea
Baked potato and cheese or individual chicken vindaloo or individual lasagne or gammon steak and pineapple with one type of potato and one type of seasonal vegetable.

All meals are served with tea or tap water. One sachet of coffee is available during breakfast.

Cost per day £1.52 per person.

Antony Worrall Thompson's Alternative

Breakfast
Herb mushrooms and kidneys on toast. Extra toast.

Lunch
Chicken tagine with couscous or vegetarian lasagne.

Dinner
Stir-fried pork ribbons with string beans and basil, garlic and chilli sauce or Thai-style stir-fry codfish or salmon and dill fish cake or Rajasthani rabbit curry or lentil and vegetable curry.

Side dishes like salad, potatoes, rice and bread.

Cost also at £1.52 per day per person, based on a £7,600 budget for a prison with 500 inmates.

over small portions, non-existent meal choices, food being cooked too far in advance and large time gaps between meals. At Woodhill Prison near Milton Keynes, inmates were supposed to be given 4oz of meat or protein per meal, but only received one-and-a-half ounces.

Mr Worrall Thompson, who is the cook on BBC2's *Food and Drink* programme, brought some healthy living to the menu. "A lot of the prisoners work out when they're behind bars," he said. "So they don't just want fatty pies."

For breakfast, out went the traditional porridge and boiled eggs. They were replaced with kidney. "It's a healthy and tasty start to the day." He also added a Moroccan dish — Chicken Tagine. "In my experience, prisoners love spicy food," he explained.

However, Mr Worrall Thompson could not afford to use real basil and garlic with the stir-fried pork ribbons. "But the powdered type would be fine," he said. His menu added up to £1.25 per person. This left 27p spare for side dishes like salad, potatoes, rice and bread.

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5/ISAIAH BERLIN

Our greatest thinker, who straddled a terrible century

Sir Isaiah Berlin (pictured above), don, diplomat, historian, political theorist and philosopher, died on Wednesday at the age of 88. Rupert Cornwell gives just a taste of the life and impact of an intellectual lion of the 20th century.

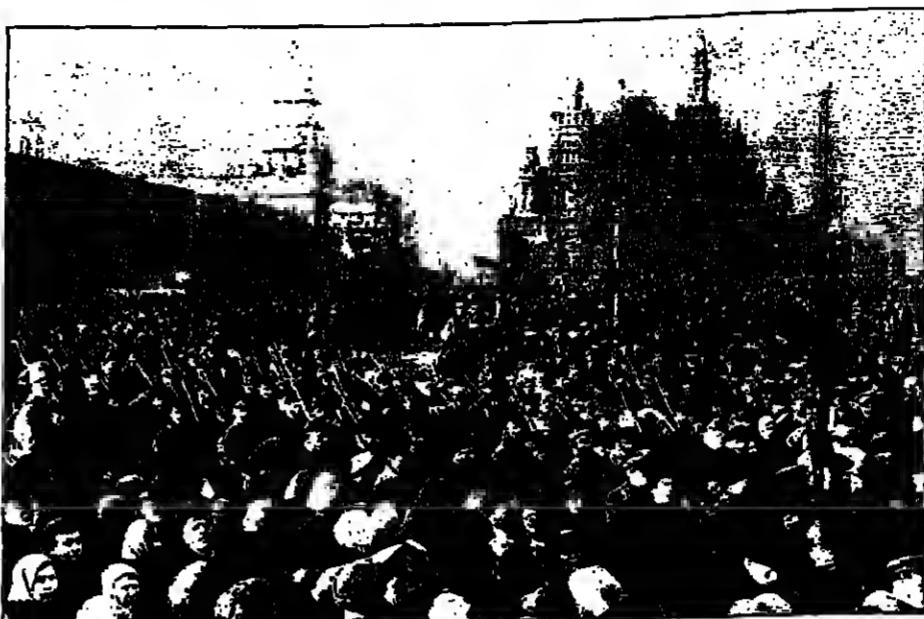
Even without the academic accomplishments which adorned it, Isaiah Berlin's was a life that encapsulated a century - from an early childhood in Riga and St Petersburg to England and Oxford, to Washington and then back to Moscow as a diplomat, then Oxford once more, and the summits of the English establishment as a director of the Royal Opera House, and the presidency of the British Academy.

But he will be best remembered for two things: his scholarship and his ability to communicate his scholarship. In Berlin three strands wonderfully fused: a Russian fascination with ideas, a sense of community derived from his Jewish origins, and a devotion to tolerance, the dignity of the individual, and freedom taken from his adopted country of England. And for those who knew him and studied under him, his finest pulpit was the lecture rooms of postwar Oxford.

Isaiah Berlin was the university's in-house legend, a Pavarotti at the rostrum of learning, a multilingual, multidisciplinary force of nature. For those who listened to him, the memory is indelible - the glittering, tumbling torrent of words as speech struggled to keep up with the Catherine wheel of ideas that was his mind. He was once measured at 400 words a minute, twice the normal rate. Whether it was total enlightenment or inspired obfuscation was dech-



The life of Isaiah Berlin, pictured with Sir Yehudi Menuhin (right), encapsulated a century, from the Russian revolution to Fascism to the fall of the Berlin Wall. Photographs: AP/Sydney Harris



able: "Unintelligible, in several languages," AL Rowse once remarked, only part jest. But the sheer sweep and wit of the man, the richness and originality of his mind, made you feel, if only for an instant, that suddenly everything was clear.

Berlin has not escaped revisionism's hards. For today's philosophy students he is no longer required reading. So, some start to wonder, was he really a unique genius? Or was he merely an inflated Oxford cult figure, a Grade One listed monument of the high table, unique only in that gift the English intelligentsia prize above every other - of holding forth at the drop of a hat, effortlessly, authoritatively and

humorously, about any subject, under the sun? He could do that - and how. But he was not just clever. He was also wise.

He offered a remarkable combination of historian and philosopher, a studio of ideas who also shaped ideas. Berlin is famous above all as a liberal. You did not have to be an aspiring historian or philoso-

pher to have read his 1959 essay "Two Concepts of Liberty" and be disquieted and enthralled by the distinction drawn between "freedom from" and "freedom to" - the one the justificatory claim of Communism which he loathed, the other all too easily a licence to tyrannise.

Today, the "Two Concepts"

is less admired, and Berlin himself admitted in his last published interview, in last month's issue of Prospect magazine, that "I should have made more of the horrors of negative liberty, and all that has led to." No one, however, would challenge the central lesson he drew from "this most terrible century in Western history", that nothing was as dangerous as blind pursuit of a political or philosophical system. He had seen these evils at first hand: the overthrow of tsar Nicholas II and Lenin's coup, as a child in St Petersburg, and the ebb and flow of the Second World War from the British embassy in Washington. Famously, his dis-

patches were some of Churchill's favourite wartime reading.

Above all, perhaps, he recognised that in an imperfect world good was divisible, that noble intentions often conflicted, that the most intractable disputes are where both contestants are right. From that flowed a special skill, of illuminating each side of an argument. He was a mesmerising raconteur - but "at the opposite extreme from those ... who use their gifts to monopolise the conversation", wrote the philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre. "Berlin's splendid performances enable us to listen more intelligently to other voices, not just to his own. How much we owe him."

How much indeed. More conclusively than any other, he proved that playfulness, laughter and a sense of fun could survive a fellowship of All Souls at the age of 23. He was, wrote his biographer, Michael Ignatieff, "the rarest of creatures, a wise man who is also loveable".

All this will make him irreplaceable. Each generation throws up just a handful like him: Andre Malraux, George Kennan, John Maynard Keynes are a few names which come to mind.

We should be thankful that this particularly coruscating specimen fetched up on our shores, England, he once said, "is the best country in the world; the least corrupt, the least cruel, the least liable to enormities". Pace the trumpeting of New Labour, these days this self-doubting country tends not to see itself so. Let us therefore return the compliment. Berlin's favourite quotation is a line by Immanuel Kant: "From the crooked timber of humanity, no straight thing was ever made." If that is true, then no one was more adept at explaining and ironing out the twists, gnarls and contortions of our era than he.

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Radiation workers in child cancer link

A study of workers exposed to radiation shows they are more likely to have children who develop leukaemia. But their increased risk is not linked to radiation exposure. Jeremy Laurence, Health Editor, explains how the findings effectively dispel the fears of a link which surfaced 15 years ago, but leave questions about the causes of childhood leukaemia unanswered.

Workers in nuclear and other industries who are exposed to radiation have a 77 per cent higher risk of having a child who develops leukaemia, according to one of the largest studies yet conducted.

However, the findings by the Childhood Cancer Research Group at Oxford University, show that the risk of having a child with leukaemia was not linked with the size of the radiation dose. In fact, men with the highest risk received the

lowest or zero doses. The study, published in the *British Medical Journal*, is the most definitive so far to counter the 15-year-old hypothesis that living near or working in a nuclear power station increases the risk of cancer.

Alarm over a link between nuclear power and leukaemia was triggered in 1983 with the broadcast of the Yorkshire Television documentary, *The Nuclear Laundry*, which claimed that the high level of childhood leukaemia in the Cumbrian village of Seascale was linked with the nearby nuclear reprocessing plant at Sellafield.

The programme's claims gained scientific credibility following publication of a study, also in the *BMJ*, by the respected cancer epidemiologist Martin Gardner, which appeared to show that exposure of men to radiation before conception increased the risk of leukaemia in their offspring. Exposure to radiation, it was suggested, might damage the genetic material in the men's sperm.

The *BMJ* describes the "Gardner hypothesis" as one of the most important papers it has published in the last 15 years. However, despite the efforts of researchers in the UK

and abroad, no group has ever succeeded in replicating its findings.

The new study, led by Dr Gerald Draper, director of the Childhood Cancer Research Group, "almost finishes" the Gardner hypothesis, the *BMJ* says. It concludes that the most likely explanation for the increased risk among radiation workers is exposure to infection resulting from mixing of the population.

This theory suggests that childhood leukaemia may be a rare reaction to infection which is more common when there is a big influx of people to an isolated rural community, as when a nuclear power station is being built.

Although the 77 per cent increase in risk for radiation-exposed workers looks high, the absolute risk is still small. There are 6.5 cases of leukaemia and the related condition non-Hodgkin's lymphoma per 10,000 children under 15, and the study authors estimate that this is raised to 11.9 per 10,000.

Dr Draper said: "The public alarm over living near a nuclear power station is overdone. The popular conception that there are lots of cancers around them is wrong."



In tune: Robert Tewsey and Lucia Lacarra rehearsing Nutcracker for the English National Ballet premiere in Southampton next week
Photograph: Laurie Lewis

Ministers accused of Hackney U-turn

The Government was accused of doing a U-turn yesterday, after ministers backed Hackney Council's rejection of most of the proposals of a hit squad set up to remedy the London borough's education crisis.

Richard Painter, chairman of the improvement team sent into Hackney by the Government, last night rejected suggestions that he would resign. But he is, however, asking for meetings with both government and council officials, after Stephen Byers, the school standards minister, welcomed the council education committee's "positive response".

Before Wednesday night's meeting, official Labour councillors in Hackney were also backing Mr Painter's team. Mr Byers' intervention is understood to have led to their decision to support rebel Labour, Conservative and Liberals in opposing the team's proposals.

Mark Lushington of the Hackney Teachers' Association said there had been a stitch-up. "Ministers have caved in to the local politicians – this government is supposed to be about education, education, not politics, politics."

A Department for Education spokesman said the Government had not backed down. "We asked for someone to head the education service in Hackney and the council has agreed to that."

The improvement team was invited into Hackney after an inspectors' report said the education service was "in disarray".

But Mr Painter said they did not go far enough. "My team is very unhappy about this. They are all pretty upset."

— judith judd

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How pilots train for disaster

Experts yesterday removed a Virgin Atlantic jet from the Heathrow Airport runway where it had made an emergency landing. As the man who brought it to earth was hailed a hero, Louise Jury looks at how pilots are trained to deal with such emergencies.

Retired Captain Eric Moody knows what it is like to endure that heart-stopping moment when a plane fails. Fifteen years ago, all four engines on his plane cut out when a volcano erupted beneath him and he flew through the ash.

"The only thing that goes through your mind is how the hell you get out of the mess you're in. You don't believe it to start with. Then things happen which convince you. You begin to think very lucidly."

They are moments that pilots are trained for, but training today is rarely done in an aeroplane. Simulators have been devised which give a life-like sensation of real flight.

Dave Badrick, a training captain for Virgin, says pilots training for a new type of aircraft would spend up to 60 hours on the simulator.

Every six months, they return for two days to practice routine procedures and to work through a series of potential emergencies. There is a mammoth half an inch thick covering dozens of potential disasters

from hydraulic failure to the failures of one or all the engines. Over a three-year period, all possibilities would be covered.

Captain Badrick said: "It's quite easy to forget you're in a simulator. They perform just like an aeroplane."

But although Captain Moody agreed they were "remarkably real", he said he could never get it out of his mind that he was still on solid ground. "Being several thousand feet in the air is a great concentrator of the mind."

Captain Tim Barnaby made his emergency landing on Wednesday afternoon after his Virgin Atlantic flight VS024 from Los Angeles developed undercarriage problems. Yesterday, travellers faced delays and service was not expected to return to normal until today.

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	0.500	0.400

*GROSS RATE is the contractual rate of interest payable net taking account of the deduction of income tax at the lower rate.
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7/ENVIRONMENT NEWS

Worst pollution for three years – but nothing is done

Britain has just had its worst smog in three years, with pollution levels in our major cities equal to those which triggered an emergency crackdown on traffic in Paris last month. Yet, says our Environment Correspondent Nicholas Schoon, over here the Government alerted no one and took no action.

The authorities in Paris ordered half of all private cars off the road and made public transport free when levels of nitrogen dioxide reached a critical point five weeks ago. When these same levels were reached in London last Friday and Tuesday, no one noticed and nothing happened. British environmental groups fumed at what they saw as outrageous government complacency.

The cause of the smog was pollution – road traffic was the most important source – combined with freezing temperatures and very still air conditions lasting for several days. Dirty air was effectively trapped, while pollutants accumulated in it. Bonfires have added to the smog, especially boosting levels of particulates – microscopic specks which can be drawn deep into the lungs and are thought to be among the most dangerous components of air pollution.

But the highest levels of nitrogen dioxide, the key smog indicator, were reached on Friday before the Bonfire Night celebrations got under way. At three London



monitoring stations, in Camden, Wandsworth and Southwark, they went well above 200 parts per billion – the situation which triggered the drastic action in Paris.

Similar or even higher levels were hit in Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Birmingham, Newcastle, Bristol,

Manchester, and Newcastle. It was the worst smog since December 1994. For many hours, millions of people were exposed to pollution levels well into the Government's "poor" band, and above the health standard set by its panel of expert advisors.

Last night, a spokeswoman for the De-

partment of the Environment, Transport and the Regions said: "We didn't do anything extra than what we would normally do." The routine dissemination of data and forecasts for air quality continued on Cefax, Teletext and a telephone helpline.

Mary Stevens, of the National Society

for Clean Air, said: "No action was taken, no one was notified. This shows that pollution remains a big problem, and the Government should not be dragging its feet."

Roger Higman, transport campaigner with Friends of the Earth, said: "It's outrageous that air pollution can get so bad and

A bus making its way across London Bridge while the rest of the capital's skyline is shrouded in smog. The Government has been accused of inaction over pollution levels
Photograph: Tom Pilston

the Government can't give out an alert."

In theory, councils have emergency powers to shut major roads when pollution reaches health-threatening levels. They have never been used. The Government is implementing an air quality strategy devised by its Tory predecessors. But the British approach is to try to ensure pollutants never hit levels high enough to require drastic action to get cars off the road. It is an approach now brought into question.

The smog has now passed with the change in the weather. It came to light as latest Government figures, released yesterday, showed traffic levels in July to September 4 per cent higher than for the same time last year. Meanwhile, new research suggests just 20 per cent of Britain's drivers are responsible for half the miles driven and half the pollution generated by cars.

The study, conducted by Oxford University's Environmental Change Unit in two Oxfordshire villages, found such drivers are predominantly male, in high-paid employment, and mostly driving company cars. In all, the 14 per cent of respondents with company cars were responsible for 36 per cent of carbon dioxide emissions.

Official green watchdog fears cuts

The Government's green watchdog says it is facing cutbacks and hundreds of job losses because ministers are sticking to their Tory predecessors' spending plans. But, says Nicholas Schoon, the threat can be lifted if it is allowed to charge polluting industry more.

The Environment Agency will have to cut 500 staff over the next three years unless it is allowed to boost its spending, its leaders warned yesterday.

Ministers in the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions have flatly rejected the agency's plea for the Tory government's spending plans to be changed – plans which would see real falls in its total income over the next three years.

Now it hopes it will be allowed to raise the charges it imposes on the firms it monitors by above the rate of inflation, to make up the shortfall. That idea was anathema to the last government but this one may be persuaded.

A large industrial plant operating several processes which emit pollutants into the air and rivers can be charged tens of

thousands of pounds a year for inspection and monitoring by the agency. A small above-inflation increase could bring in an extra £5m which, said chief executive Ed Gallagher, could make all the difference.

The agency, created just 18 months ago by amalgamating several other organisations, has a £560m a year budget and 9,500 staff who monitor and control pollution of land, air and water as well as overseeing flood defences and water resources.

Its chairman, Lord de Ramsey, and Mr Gallagher said activities which bring real environmental gains but which it is not compelled by law to carry out will have to be cut. One

of these is its efforts to control fly-tipping, which is rising around the country after the introduction of a tax on waste dumping at landfill sites. In Northampton instances of fly-tipping have risen 60 per cent.

Also under threat are its efforts to educate and persuade polluting industry, especially smaller firms, that cutting their output of toxic substances into the environment can boost efficiency and save money.

Mr Gallagher said he feared cutbacks could leave the Government vulnerable to legal challenges by environmental groups to the European Commission, and eventually the European Court.

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Dispute helps Smashey and Nicey rediscover their voices



Keith Chegwin: The former DJ has found a lucrative line in voice-overs thanks to an Equity dispute

An actor's boycott of television adverts has given an unexpected lease of life to a much maligned group of entertainers - former Radio One DJs.

Bruno Brookes, Keith Chegwin and Mike Read - three DJs of the generation whose ingratiating style was pilloried mercilessly by the comedian Harry Enfield through his characters Smashey and Nicey - are making a comeback in advertisements while members of the actors' union, Equity, are not available the wheels of advertising have to keep moving."

Advertising agencies are becoming so short of people to make their commercials they have been recruiting commuters as they get off trains and drinkers from file out of pubs.

The problem began in May when Equity told its members to boycott British television commercials in protest at plans to reduce by up to two-thirds the fee paid in voice-over artists.

This has created an opportunity for the former Radio One trio - who are all working currently on commercials. With repeat

fees and royalties they could earn up to £20,000.

Almost all actors are members of Equity but some DJs classify themselves as "presenters". Tony Fox, agent for the trio, said: "When Keith Chegwin is on a TV commercial he doesn't play a 'role'. He doesn't act. He appears as Keith Chegwin."

Bruno Brookes, who currently fronts various radio shows from a converted studio in his home, said: "My advertising work has tripled since the boycott began. I've got no problem with Equity but while its members are not available the wheels of advertising have to keep moving."

He added that hiring radio presenters such as himself was more expensive for the industry.

All of which has left Equity rather deflated. A spokesman for the union said: "The artists need to know that we are acting in the interests of anyone who does voice-overs. We will be speaking to their representatives so they are made fully aware that if we lose this case everyone involved could lose out."

— Benjamin Todd



Bruno Brookes: He says that his work in advertising has tripled since the Equity boycott began

Bentley case goes back to appeal court 44 years on

The case of Derek Bentley, who was hanged 44 years ago for the murder of a policeman during a bungled robbery, is to be referred back to the Court of Appeal. The decision, writes Jason Bennett, Crime Correspondent, is a major victory for the Bentley family.

More than four decades after Derek Bentley was convicted of murder he is likely to be cleared of the charge posthumously.

The Criminal Cases Review Commission, set up earlier this year to investigate alleged miscarriages of justice, announced yesterday that it was sending the case back for the appeal court judges to reconsider.

The commission concluded that there were several potential areas which suggested the conviction was unsafe.

The Bentley family have always maintained that Derek, 19, should never have been executed for his part in the killing of Constable Sidney Miles during a break-in at a warehouse in Croydon, south London in 1952.

PC Miles was shot dead by Bentley's accomplice, Christopher Craig, 16, after he confronted them on the warehouse roof.

At the teenagers' trial three policemen alleged that immediately before the murder Bentley shouted to him: "Let him have it, Chris".

Lord Chief Justice Goddard told the jury that when two people go out on a criminal enterprise which ends in murder, both are guilty in law, whoever fired the shots.

Craig, who was too young to hang, was jailed and served 10 years, but Bentley was sentenced to death. The jury was never told that he had a mental age of just 11.

Following his execution at Wandsworth Prison in January 1953, Bentley's sister, Iris, mounted a lifelong campaign to clear his name.

In 1993, Iris Bentley won a partial victory when Michael Howard, the then home secretary, granted a limited posthu-

mous pardon, accepting that her brother should not have been hanged while maintaining his guilt.

She was finally allowed to erect a headstone over her brother's grave, 27 years after getting his body moved from Wandsworth prison to Croydon cemetery.

However, she died last January of cancer. Since then the campaign to win a full pardon has been led by her daughter, Maria Bentley-Dingwall.

The solicitors for the Bentley family argued yesterday that the material that persuaded the Criminal Cases Review Commission that the case should be referred to the Court of Appeal was "virtually identical" to one presented to the



Derek Bentley: Likely to be cleared of murder

Home Office in October 1996, but no action was taken.

Ms Bentley-Dingwall, said she was "absolutely ecstatic" at yesterday's decision.

"But I just wish my mother was alive to see this day. It was what she fought for so long and she would have been so happy," she added.

"My family has had to go through so much and knowing your son or brother has been hanged is terrible."

Among the reason for the commission referring the case back to the appeal court included a medical report not disclosed at the time of the trial showing Bentley was "feeble-minded" and the suggestion that his statement was taken incorrectly by the police.

Rape victims may be spared grilling from defendants

Ministers are considering plans which would, in effect, bar rape victims from cross-examination by their alleged attackers.

The proposal, which comes after a case in which a rapist was able to question his two victims for days in open court, is one of several options being considered by an inter-departmental group set up to look at the interests of witnesses.

At present child witnesses are protected from cross-examination by defendants, and the idea under consideration is to extend this right to other vulnerable witnesses, such as alleged rape victims.

Another option being discussed by the Vulnerable Witness Group, which is due to report in the New Year, is to recommend fresh guidance for judges, giving them full disclosure to prevent, or stop cross-examination if they feel the defendant is abusing his or her right to a fair trial.

At the moment ministers believe that judges are too constrained by fears that by preventing effective cross-examination, defendants would have strong grounds for an appeal.

A spokeswoman said that while defendants had a right to a fair trial, the treatment of the two women in the Knightsbridge case had been "appalling".

She added: "No women should have to go through what they went though."

The concern among all groups is that such experiences will discourage other women from coming forward as witnesses in rape cases, where there is already a low conviction rate.

— Michael Streeter

Legal Affairs Correspondent

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9/REVOLUTION

The grandson who believes it's time to rewrite history



Millions of Russians will today honour the Bolsheviks who led the October Revolution 80 years ago. Spare a thought, though, for the man they threw out. Kerensky's British grandson believes history is guilty of a terrible misjudgement.

Moscow — As Russia's Communists unfurl their red banners and sail forth on to the icy streets to celebrate the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, one man will be at home in Britain, working on plans for a mission to resurrect the reputation of a politician they once ousted and still scorn — his grandfather, Alexander.

No matter that Stephen Kerensky, a writer and antiques dealer from Warwickshire, must overcome decades of relentless Soviet propaganda. No matter that his views also run counter to those of some of the West's leading historians.

He believes that his grandfather is one of the "most vilified politicians of any era", the whipping boy of both the West and Russia in their rush to conceal errors that led to collectivisation, famine, Stalin's terror and the KGB. So he has decided to change history's mind. Family, after all, is family.

The story of Alexander Kerensky is one of those great "what ifs". Had his coalition government struggled on, would Lenin have ever taken charge? Would Stalin have terrorised and slaughtered millions? Or could Russia have become one of the world's democracies, a citadel of free speech and human rights?

A democratic lawyer, Kerensky became head of Russia's Provisional Government in the summer of 1917, four months after the monarchy finally buckled under the weight of Nicholas II's bovine conviction that he had a divine right to rule as an autocrat. After his abdication, Kerensky was one of several who persuaded the tsar's younger brother, the Grand Duke Mikhail, that there would be civil war if the monarchy tried to stagger on.

A brilliant orator and — at least, at first — a vastly popular figure, he remained in office until the Bolsheviks finally seized power, 80 years ago today, when they peppered the Winter Palace in St Petersburg with machine-gun fire, breezed in and arrested his ministers.

Kerensky, then only 36, escaped earlier in a car flying the

Stars and Stripes — an exploit in which Soviet propagandists subsequently reviled, emphasising the damning detail that he fled dressed in woman's clothing. That allegation, says Stephen Kerensky, is one slur among many. "One of the main Soviet slanders against him is that he was living like a tsar in the Winter Palace, holding orgies and being driven around in the Tsar's Rolls. That was actually Lenin's hobby, not Kerensky's."

Later this month Mr Kerensky, 48, who lives in Rugby, will press his case in person when he travels to St Petersburg for the publication of the first instalment of the memoirs of his grandmother, Olga, who settled in Britain after the revolution. It will be printed by a magazine, *Zvezda* (Star), which has taken up the cause with relish.

"We believe Kerensky was a remarkable man," says the editor-in-chief, Yakov Gordin. "His role was distorted later and caricatured for political reasons by the Soviets. Our task is to restore the true image of this important politician."

They have a formidable task

BY PHIL REEVES

on their hands; Kerensky, who eventually lived in the US, spent much of his life writing books about his version of events. His son Gleb — Stephen's father — also took up the cudgels, and for decades bombarded the *Times* with letters seeking to clear his father's name. And yet Kerensky's dismal reputation has lived on.

Especially in Russia. At 94, Alexander Alexeyev is deaf and very doddery, but he remembers the former prime minister well enough. He was 13 during the October Revolution, and now — his fragile chest weighed down by Soviet medals says: "There is nothing positive to say about Kerensky. He expressed the interests of the bourgeoisie, that's all."

Leading historians have been even less charitable, casting Kerensky in the role of a theatrical, self-indulgent figure who emerged as an early hero — a cult figure, even, among the democratic intelligentsia — of the revolution, but frittered his support away through indecision and vanity.

Richard Pipes, author of a highly authoritative history of the revolution, wrote that he was "all impulse and emotion"

That was then, this is now: Stephen Kerensky (left) at his antique stall in Warwickshire. Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

His grandfather, Alexander (right) flanked by soldiers in the Winter Palace in 1917



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Kerensky with Ekaterina Breshko-Breshkovskaya, a socialist activist who became known as the 'Mother of the Revolution'

11/CLINTON SCANDAL

Privates on parade as sex harassment case turns ugly



Struggle for dignity: Clinton's advisers have fought tooth and nail to keep the President out of court.

President who can even charm enemies

Some of the qualities that explain why so many Americans are prepared to give the US President the benefit of the doubt in the Paula Jones case – or even forgive him if necessary – were fully on display yesterday, when Mr Clinton went to College Station in Texas to inaugurate the presidential library of his predecessor at the White House, George Bush.

Bill Clinton's personal charm and political savvy are second to none and have recently elicited grudging respect even from Mr Bush – who dismissed his rival during the 1992 election campaign as a "bozo".

His lightning trip to Texas allowed him not only to mend fences gracefully with his predecessor, but also to earn political capital for his bid to obtain what is known as "fast track" authority from Congress. The Senate is expected to vote today on whether it will restore "fast track" authority to the President to negotiate international trade agreements –

— Mary Dejevsky

As Bill Clinton busies himself with the affairs of state in Washington, a court in Arkansas is working steadily through the preliminaries of a case that threatens to expose a cruder side to the President. But Americans cannot decide whether they want to know about it or not, as Mary Dejevsky reports.

This week, television viewers in Washington DC were surprised to see a commercial featuring a picture of a woman looking very like Paula Jones – the woman who accuses Bill Clinton of exposing himself to her in an Arkansas hotel room six years

ago and asking for oral sex. The commercial asks for women who may have been "sexually harassed by the President" to register their complaints.

No one ever pretended that the lawsuit known as "Paula Jones v the President of the United States" would be an edifying experience. Since late summer, however, when Ms Jones rejected a financial settlement – rumoured to be close to the \$700,000 she had originally claimed – sacked her lawyers and hired an aggressive PR consultant, things have started to get brutal.

Ms Jones has submitted a list of intimate questions to Mr Clinton in an attempt to solicit details of his sex life and his anatomy. Her lawyers have also named – and in at least one case, subpoenaed – women believed to be former girlfriends of the President, including Gennifer

Flowers. She is the woman named during the 1992 election campaign as his long-time mistress, who has steadfastly refused to speak against him.

The strategy is two-fold: to show "a pattern of behaviour" in Mr Clinton's past and to demonstrate the veracity of an affidavit Ms Jones reportedly swore when she first brought her case three years ago that could prove her case. In the affidavit, Ms Jones apparently describes "distinguishing characteristics" of Mr Clinton's "genital area".

Last month, it seemed the puzzle of the distinguishing characteristics had been solved, when newspapers quoted "sources" as saying she referred to a curvature of the President's erect penis – a phenomenon said to be caused by Peyronie's disease. The theory was backed up by more "in-

formed sources" saying that Mr Clinton had been tested for this condition during his annual medical examination the previous week.

Meanwhile, the court in Little Rock, Arkansas, was embarking on the preliminary hearings of witnesses that are a prelude to most American court cases. So far, evidence has been taken from Ms Jones' close relatives, former colleagues, and a couple of women said to have been high-school girlfriends of Bill Clinton.

The odds that the case will actually come to court on the appointed date of 26 May have shortened dramatically. Having rejected a settlement said to be close to what she had asked for, because it was conditional on Mr Clinton not accepting responsibility or apologising, Ms Jones is said to want only to restore her reputation.

Mr Clinton's lawyer, Robert Bennett, has done his utmost to keep the case out of court (and out of the headlines). After failing to have the case deferred – to protect the President from distraction during his term of office – or dismissed for lack of evidence, Mr Bennett has successfully persuaded the judge to impose a "gag" order on the preliminary hearings to prevent the testimony from becoming public.

In keeping the case low-key, however, Mr Bennett has also been considerably helped by the ambivalence of the American media about what should and should not be disclosed. Popular curiosity comes up against American prudishness and deference to the office of the presidency. Even before the gag order, little emerged from the Little Rock hearings, and the reporting of the distinguishing



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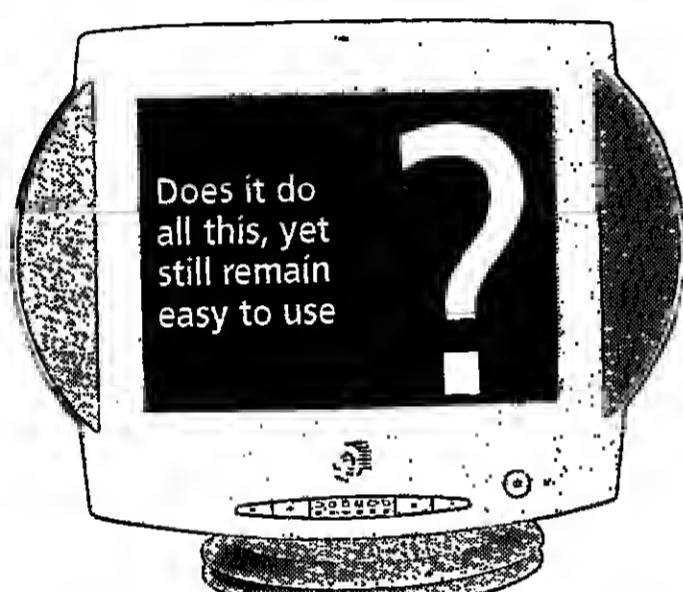
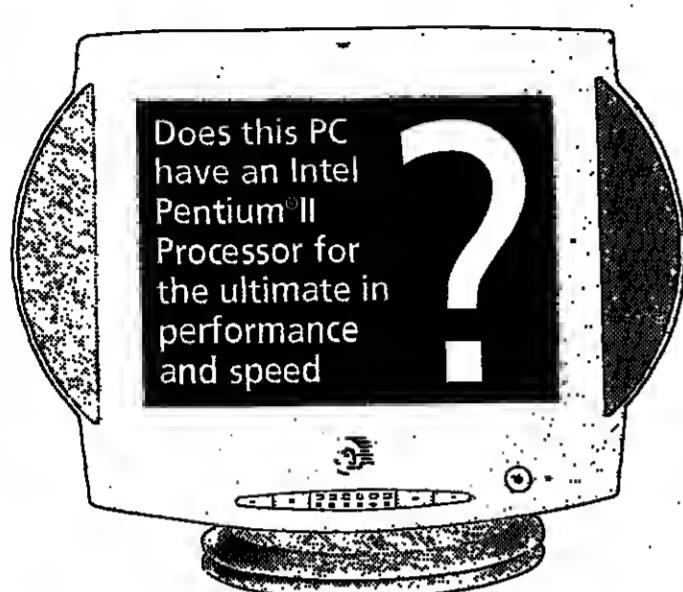
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Girls behaving badly pose a new problem

Despite years of warnings, more young women are drinking too much and, for the first time, the proportion who smoke has risen.

Every year since 1972 smoking has been on the decline in Britain. But this year for the first time young women are bucking the trend. The Office for National Statistics warned yesterday that smoking amongst women - and particularly young women - is again on the rise.

Coupled with that, large amounts of young women are now drinking more than the recommended maximum amount of alcohol a week. Whereas the Department of Health has recommended 14 units as a "safe" level since 1984, the numbers of women drinking above that level has in-

Health campaigners are worried that young women are increasingly pursuing habits which damage their health. A greater amount of disposable income – particularly among single women, those working and women under 25 – means

The results of the General Household Survey found that while cigarette smoking has risen by 2 per cent amongst women generally (the reverse was true of men) among the 16- to 19-year-olds the increase was 5 per cent and among the 25- to 34-year-olds 4 per cent.

The ONS findings reflect

those of the Health Education Authority which has warned that lung cancer deaths are set to overtake breast cancer as the biggest killer of women. The authority said yesterday that it is launching an anti-smoking campaign which will focus on women, particularly teenagers. A third of 15-year-olds were smoking and the evidence suggested that they are taking the habit onwards.

"We are very concerned," said a spokesman for the HEA. "Why young women are smoking more is the million dollar question but we're trying to find out." He said the media had played a role, especially in films in which smoking was associated with glamour and power.

A spokeswoman for ASH - Action on Smoking and Health - said that there was no single explanation for the rise. "But tobacco companies are spending £100m on advertising whereas the Government are spending £10m on anti-smoking education."

Both more men and women are recorded as drinking over sensible levels in the GHS but the significant increase is amongst women and again the largest increase is among younger women – a quarter of 18- to 24-year-olds drink more than they should.

Earlier this year it was reported that the number of women drinking above recommended levels rose by 50 per cent between 1984 and 1994, and a study by Alcohol Concern said that 500,000 women now drink at "very risky" levels - defined as more than 50 units a week (or 25 pints of ordinary

• *Living in Britain: Preliminary Results from the 1996 General Household Survey*. Stationery Office; £10.



Drink problem: Health surveys show young women are drinking and smoking too much

Photograph: Joel Chant

Elderly least likely to be burgled

Elderly people are less likely than those in any other age group to suffer burglary. Glendo Cooper looks at a survey which provides a unique snapshot of our life today.

modation or those in social housing.

A spokesman for Age Concern said: "The reason why elderly people suffer less burglaries is that a lot of burglaries occur during the day when people are out, but older people tend to be in."

"But it should be reassuring for older people who can sometimes feel vulnerable and have a fear of crime. There is also a misconception that older people are likely to be attacked in the street but statistically young, single men are much more at risk. The one exception

Living in a household where there are one or two elderly people over the age of 60 carries a much lower risk of burglary than any other household, according to a survey.

The preliminary results from the 1996 General Household Survey show that the burglary rate was 23 per 1,000 households compared to 55 per 1,000 where adults and children live. The survey also revealed that the burglary rate has fallen from 4.6 per cent in

"There is a popular view that elderly people living alone are more likely to be vulnerable but they are less likely to be burgled," said Paul Hunter, the survey's principal researcher.

Those living in detached houses were also less likely to be burgled than their neighbours in semi-detached or terraced houses. Those most at risk from break-ins were those living in private rented accom-

living in private rented accom- 1.8 children.

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Rainstorms kill 31 in southern Spain and Portugal

More than 20 people died in Spain and at least 11 in Portugal yesterday after torrential rainstorms ravaged the southern part of both countries. In Spain the region of Extremadura, near the Portuguese border, was worst affected, with roads and railways cut and electricity and telephone lines down. Extremadura's regional governor called for the area to be declared a disaster zone and urged people not to drive on the motorways, which had turned into rivers. Andalucia was also badly affected, with the fishing fleet confined to port and the River Guadalquivir near Cadiz 15 metres higher than usual and on the point of bursting its banks. Seville and Cordoba were among the towns devastated by storm damage.

Army units were mobilised to help people trapped in their homes and to clear the forest of fallen trees that lay strewn across the country. Forecasters said the 100kph rainstorms would gradually ease off, but that strong westerly winds would continue.

— Elizabeth Nash, Madrid



After the deluge: Residents of Badajoz in Extremadura, Spain clear up yesterday. Rain turned roads into rivers. Photograph: Reuters

Serb soldier confesses to war atrocities

A Serbian paramilitary fighter in the wars in Croatia and Bosnia has admitted torturing and killing up to 80 people, including women, and said he cut off Muslims' ears for sale.

"I am a dead man and nothing worse can happen to me," Slobodan Misic, a former convict told the Serbian newspaper *Novine Vojiske*. "I am 50 years old, and I am sick of lying."

Serbia has denied involvement in the wars in Bosnia and Croatia after they declared independence from the federation in 1991-92.

Misic's account was the first time since the wars that a Serbian paramilitary soldier has openly admitted to committing atrocities to the domestic media and public.

He said he did not regret his actions, except the murders of two Muslim women.

"I would do the same again, if something were to break out in Kosovo," he said, referring to the troubled Albanian-majority province in southern Serbia.

Asked if he wasn't tired of killing, he replied: "The biggest

mistake is when you kill for the first time. After that it just goes on its own ... You can't understand how it is. It gets into your blood, your brain. Like a drug. You just can't go without it."

He said he volunteered in 1991 because he "could not bear to see mass crimes against the Serb population" and was sent to the front line near Vukovar in Croatia.

The first man Misic said he killed was a Croat: "First I was scared and censured, but after two or three days you get used to everything." He said the largest number of people were killed in Vukovar. "They killed us, we killed them."

When the war started in Bosnia in April 1992 he joined local paramilitary units operating in eastern Bosnia. They "cleaned out the Muslim villages, one by one".

When short of funds, he said he sold Muslims' ears to Serbs for 50 German marks apiece. He said he always cut off the ears personally, and always the left ear. "One ear – one Muslim," he said.

— Reuters, Belgrade

Blair summit call for EU reform

President Jacques Chirac and his Socialist Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, arrived last night for their "Docklands summit" with Tony Blair, to be greeted by a new British call for sweeping reform of the European Union institutions.

Returning to a theme that Britain intends to imprint upon its forthcoming EU presidency, Mr Blair said Europe was not functioning to the benefit of its people, and the "necessary changes" had to be made in its structures.

"We're not creating enough jobs, we have to learn to co-operate better," he told the French daily *Le Monde*.

Mr Chirac's first stops were the traditional ones of a meeting the Queen at Buckingham Palace, followed by a dinner at 10 Downing Street.

Thereafter, however, the tempo and the setting change completely — in serious talks, out in Whitehall but the steel and glass modernity of Canary

Wharf, hosted by Mr Blair as a showcase for his own and youthful Britain. The décor, the menu, even the views of the nearby Millennium Dome site, all seek to convey a vigorous, creative country.

The discussions themselves are expected to be amicable enough, especially as the French truck-drivers' dispute seemed last night to be edging towards settlement. But Mr Blair and Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, will seek assurances that the planned European Council, informally grouping member-countries of the single currency, will not prove a device that excludes Britain from key European deliberations.

Other topics will be the crisis in Iraq and the situation in Bosnia. Among the bilateral agreements to be signed is one for an electronic link-up of 100 British and French schools, and a Paris memorial to Diana, Princess of Wales.

Rupert Cornwell

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19 YEARS' EXPERIENCE SETS US A WORLD APART

150

15/IRAQ

Stronger Saddam tests US power in the Middle East

Iraq and the UN have backed away from immediate confrontation over the American members of the UN strategic weapons monitoring team. But the longer-term indications are gloomy.

Our correspondent reports on the latest bout between Iraq and the US and asks if the status quo in the Middle East since the end of the Gulf war is beginning to collapse.

would like to replace Saddam Hussein, but by a coup not a revolution. It does not want Iraq to break up, with the majority Iraqi Shia community siding with Iran and the Iraqi Kurds seeking independence. It is useful to have President Saddam as a bogeyman to keep Saudi Arabia and Kuwait firmly allied to the US.

But there is also no doubt that Iraq has tried to hide as

BY PATRICK
COCKBURN

much of its strategic weapons arsenal as possible. In 1995, 130 gyroscopes and guidance systems taken from old Soviet SS-18 missiles were intercepted at Amman airport on their way to Baghdad. Iraq had paid \$2m for them and their only possible purpose is to guide long-range missiles.

The numbers of such weapons is unlikely to be large. Toxins like anthrax are not a weapon of mass destruction in the same sense as a nuclear device. Iraq successfully fired al-Hussein Scud missiles at Saudi Arabia and Israel in the Gulf war without benefit to itself. It did not dare use the chemical and nerve gases it had in storage during the war because of fear of retaliation.

It is irrational for the Iraqi leader to fight so hard to retain these weapons, since they provide such a handy excuse for the US to maintain sanctions. The explanation is probably simple megalomania and a desire to show 20 million Iraqis and the rest of the world that he cannot be pushed around.

His past behaviour proves that Saddam Hussein has a good, if brutal, understanding of Iraqi politics. It is the international reaction to his moves that he misjudges, as when he invaded Iran in 1980 and Kuwait in 1990.

President Saddam's willingness to stage a confrontation now also probably reflects confidence that his strength is growing. He is in a stronger position at home than five years ago. Last year he successfully intervened with his tanks in Iraqi Kurdistan and US planes did not attack him. The Iraqi opposition had to flee the Kurdish mountains. A plot for a military coup in Baghdad backed by the CIA collapsed.

backed by the CIA collapsed. The family feuding which led to

COHEN FIRES WARNING SHOT IN ARMS ROW

William Cohen, the United States Defense Secretary, warned Iraq yesterday that it is violating United Nations Security Council resolutions by blocking UN weapons inspectors, and said economic or military steps against Baghdad might be the result.

"This is not a negotiable item," Mr Cohen said.

For the fourth time yesterday, Saddam Hussein barred American members of an international inspection team from entering the country to look for biological and chemical weapons. The Iraqi leader claims the Americans are bent on spying.

Mr Cohen's statement echoed others from UN officials that the Iraqi blockade is in clear violation of the 1991 ceasefire accords that ended the Gulf War. UN officials have charged the

Iraqis with taking advantage of a two-week forced halt in weapons inspections to disable surveillance cameras and hide key equipment at suspected arms sites, and Mr Cohen said that Washington agrees with those assessments.

consider "a whole panoply" of steps that might be taken in response to the Iraqi incursion, Mr. Cohen said.

transience, Mr Cohen said.

Asked whether they included US military strikes, he added: "They could include further economic measures, they could include military as well." Iraqi attempts to separate Americans out of the UN inspections teams are doomed to failure, he added.

"They are not going to be

"They are not going to be able to divide the United States from the United Nations."

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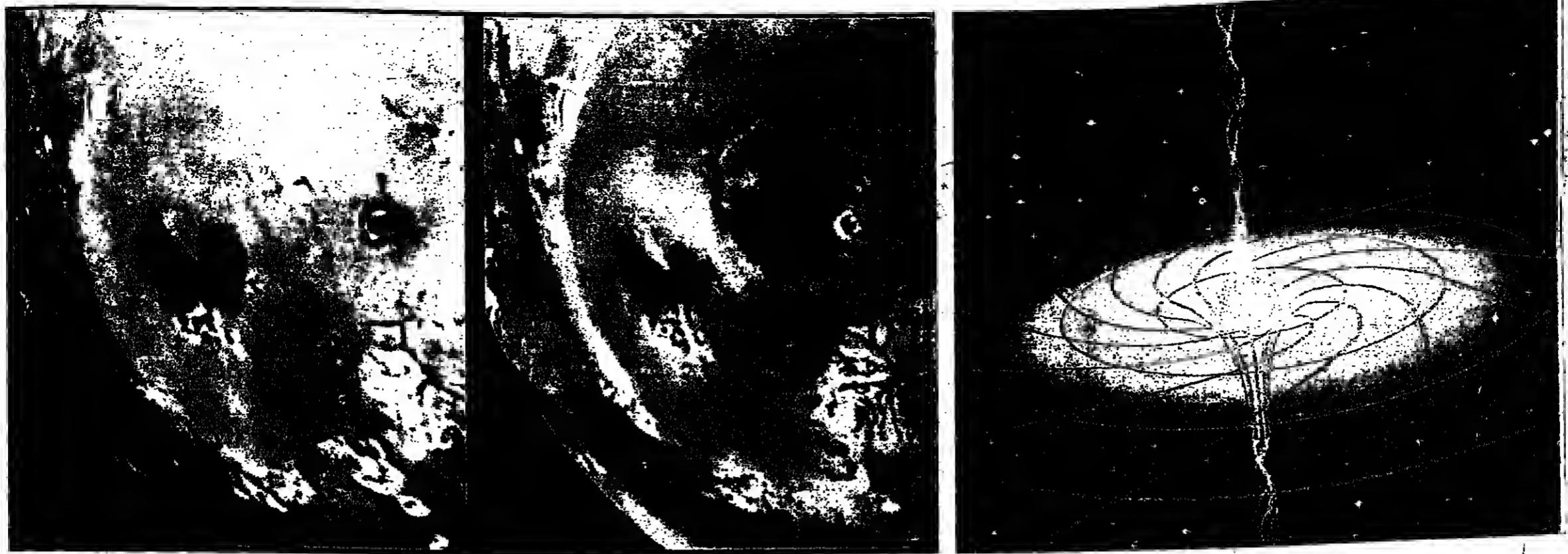
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Women hope for food from the Red Crescent in Baghdad. Saddam thinks the weapons crisis will help break the siege of Iraq

Photograph: Reuters

Io, one of Jupiter's moons (right), photographed in April by the Galileo craft, and again five months later (centre) showing a grey spot, 250 miles across, of new lava, meaning that Io could in theory harbour life (Photos: Nasa) unlike a black hole (far right) whose massive spinning forces distort space and even time. Artist's representation: Joe Bergeron/Sky and Telescope Magazine



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(On November 10th, find out what you're missing.)

Einstein passes black hole test

Albert Einstein's general theory of relativity is 81 years old - but astronomers are still finding experimental ways to test it. The latest, from observations of five spinning black holes, demonstrates that one of the major pieces of scientific thinking of this century is correct. Charles Arthur, Science Editor, explains:

Observations have confirmed an essential tenet of Albert Einstein's general theory of relativity - that huge, spinning objects "drag" space and time around them, distorting the fabric of the universe.

A team at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) announced yesterday that it has found evidence of "frame dragging", as the phenomenon is called, around five spinning black holes in our galaxy.

Einstein's theory suggests that any object distorts space and time around it, rather like a ball bearing placed on a stretched rubber sheet. Central to this theory is the idea that any observer moving at a constant velocity will have a self-consistent "frame of reference". So someone travelling almost at the speed of light will find that his watch runs normally and light travels at the normal 186,000 miles per second. But someone at rest compared to the traveller will observe that the traveller's watch seems to run more slowly, and that the traveller (and watch) are far more massive than those at rest. But light still travels at 186,000 miles per second.

These frames of reference can be distorted; near very massive objects, time and space

do not behave as predictably they do in deep, empty space. A spinning object will drag space and time around with it, like a tornado, and this would affect those frames of reference. Thus the phenomenon is called "frame dragging".

The information is not directly useful, although some theoreticians have suggested that spinning black holes might open the way to some form of time travel.

Though the phenomenon was first predicted in 1918, it has taken nearly 70 years to be confirmed. First scientists had to demonstrate how objects massive enough to cause such a change could exist in our galaxy, then find them, and finally find evidence that backs up the theoretical prediction.

The existence of massive black holes - objects that exert such a strong gravitational pull that not even light can escape them - has been shown by a number of astronomical observations, though nobody has ever seen one directly.

The MIT team used observations from five black holes which pull in material from a neighbouring star. The material forms an "accretion disc" around the black hole, then as it falls into it, heats up and gives off X-rays.

It was these X-rays that the team measured to determine the existence of frame-dragging. Dr Wei Cui, head of the team, told the American Astronomical Society at a meeting in Colorado yesterday that predictions showed that the matter in the accretion disc should wobble - "much as a child's top wobbles when it slows down".

Dr Cui then deduced that this wobbling is evidence of frame-dragging: "the matter's orbit can only wobble if the space and time in which it exists are being dragged," he said.

Flowing carpets keep Sun warm

A 55-year-old mystery about the temperature of the Sun's corona - the outermost layer, visible during a solar eclipse - has been solved by a European Space Agency (ESA) spacecraft. The answer, it turns out, is that the Sun is covered in carpets.

They are not physical carpets. Instead, they consist of moving waves of magnetism which carry more energy than a hydroelectric plant could generate in a million years.

For years, scientists have known that the corona has a temperature of millions of degrees. Yet the visible surface of the Sun is relatively cold, at about 6,000 degrees centigrade.

Since it is physically impossible for thermal energy to be transferred from the cool surface to the hotter one, scientists have long theorised that some form of electromagnetic activity was

causing the necessary energy movement.

The Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (Soho) spacecraft, run by ESA and the US space agency Nasa, has discovered that there are huge "carpets" consisting of loops of charged (and hence magnetic) particles flowing across the Sun's surface.

Where the carpets meet they produce "short circuits" which flow upwards into the corona and heat it to its multi-million degree temperature. Images collected by Soho show the hot gases of the corona reacting as the shifting magnetic fields on the surface move and develop.

"We found that after a typical small magnetic loop emerged, it fragments and drifts around and then disappears in only 40 hours," said Alan Title of the Stanford-Lockheed Institute for Space Research in Palo Alto, California.

— Charles Arthur

Standard

Resist the bias, Hesel tells civil se

Civil servants are being corrupted by the Government's political propaganda machine, Michael Heseltine said yesterday. Politics editor, reports on a c

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17/POLITICS



Clean sweep: Martin Bell (left), who successfully stood as an anti-corruption candidate, squares up to Neil Hamilton and his wife, Christine, before the general election. Photograph: Reuters

Jack
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Standards body racked by Hamilton squabbles

Neil Hamilton's bid to clear himself of 'cash for questions' allegations ended in disarray yesterday when a committee of MPs failed to agree on the charge. "It's a new system of self-regulation for Parliament fell at its first big hurdle. Fran Abrams and Jim Sengupta examine the details.

"Two members of Parliament's standards committee went on the offensive last night as they dissociated themselves from its findings on the Neil Hamilton case. The committee's response to Sir Gordon Downey's corruption inquiry was the first big test of the commissioner's new role in attacking sleaze."

Despite the rift, the committee agreed Sir Hamilton's conduct "adds up to a callousness bordering on indifference or contempt towards the rules of the House on disclosure of interests". But Tory MPs Ann Widdecombe and Quentin Davies said Mr Hamilton had been left in limbo, neither

guilty nor innocent, after a row over whether he should have had a right of appeal. Mr Davies said the public would now never know the truth.

In July, Sir Gordon reported that he believed the former minister took money from Mohamed Al Fayed without declaring it in the register of members' interests. Mr Davies said MPs should be able to regulate their own affairs but in this case had failed to do so. The whole process had been "shambolic".

"This is an appalling abdication of the fundamental responsibility of the committee to hear an appeal properly and to come to a conclusion," he said. Miss Widdecombe abstained in a final vote on the report, while Mr Davies voted against it. She said Mr Hamilton should have been given a right of appeal. "What we have actually done is to leave the man on the crucial issue, the one on which he has suffered the most public vilification, without any verdict at all and with no right of appeal. I think that is not compatible with natural justice."

The committee's report revealed how hopelessly split the MPs had been on how to respond to Sir Gordon's findings.

THE OFFICIAL VERDICT

The committee's crucial finding was on the issue of whether Neil Hamilton took £28,000 in cash and Harrods vouchers from Mohamed Al Fayed in return for asking parliamentary questions - on which Sir Gordon Downey found "compelling" evidence of guilt.

The MPs could not agree on this, and reported that they "did not arrive at a practicable way of reaching a judgement which adds to or subtracts from the Commissioner's findings". They did agree that "Mr Hamilton's conduct fell seriously and persistently below" standards expected of MPs. Had he not lost his seat in May he would have been suspended for a substantial period.

Allegations admitted by Mr Hamilton, including undeclared hospitality at The Ritz Hotel and at Balnagown Castle - both owned by Mr Fayed - would have been sufficient to warrant this.

The committee disagreed on whether there should be a right of appeal, and will examine the matter further.

Four out of the 10 agreed that the committee's own procedures were "unsatisfactory". Almost the only issue on which there was not a split vote was a crucial sentence stating that they could not find a way to judge Sir Gordon's finding on the cash-for-questions allegation.

But Mr Hamilton claimed that he had been cleared of the most serious charges. It was, he said, akin to "the difference between murder and a parking offence".

"There is an awfully big difference between corruption and a failure to declare interests. I do acknowledge there have been

some errors of judgement on my part and misunderstanding of the rules. But I refuse to accept allegations of dishonesty."

The former Tory MP continued: "It is a gross dereliction for the committee to brush this matter under the carpet on the grounds that they have neither the time nor the inclination, nor perhaps the ability, to resolve these unresolved matters."

Lord Nolan, whose report on standards in public life led to the setting up of the committee three years ago, said in a radio interview that he had recommended a right of appeal. "They have devolved more responsibility on Sir Gordon Downey for the purposes of the Neil Hamilton case than we envisaged. Why they did that, I do not know."

Charles Kennedy, the only Liberal Democrat member of the committee, said he believed the system of parliamentary self-regulation did not work, and that there should either be a form of judicial inquiry or a process similar to the criminal courts.

"The report is a damning indictment of an individual, although the issue itself remains frustratingly unresolved to my own satisfaction," he said.

Nolan reign ends on sour note

A row over the Government's decision to exempt Formula One from its tobacco sponsorship ban escalated yesterday amid revelations that the husband of the health minister, Tessa Jowell, had links with the sport. And, from Abrams reports, Lord Nolan became embroiled in the controversy.

Lord Nolan's spell as anti-sleaze watchdog ended in controversy yesterday after he told MPs that newspaper claims that he had been consulted on the best way forward for Tessa Jowell was untrue.

Lord Nolan, who was at a valedictory meeting with the Commons Public Administration Committee before his retirement this week, said he had not received any letters from the minister or her office. If he had, he would have sent a standard reply saying he did not deal with individual cases.

"I have asked our secretary to get on to Ms Jowell's office and find out what the source of this is. If the story is that she sought my advice ... she certainly hasn't received it," he said.

He added that the issue of guidance for ministers should be looked at by the Committee on Standards in Public Life under his successor, Sir Patrick Neill.

Later the Department of Health clarified its earlier statement by saying that Ms Jowell had written to the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Robin Butler, in June explaining what action she had taken to ensure there was no conflict of interest. That correspondence had been copied to Lord Nolan, it said.

The row blew up after the *Financial Times* reported that Ms Jowell's husband, David Mills, had been a non-executive director of Benetton Formula, which takes tobacco sponsorship. He resigned shortly after the general election because he recognised the potential conflict of interest with his wife's role as minister for health. Although he still takes legal work from the company, he now refuses to act in any cases relating to tobacco sponsorship.

The Tories' health spokesman, John Maples, seized on the revelation, saying he felt that in this case there had been a hint of impropriety.

But Ms Jowell said: "I have taken the greatest possible care to make sure that at every stage there is no possible conflict of interest. I have taken advice and I have acted on that advice. I think that any suggestion of any impropriety is deeply offensive."

Resist the Labour bias, Heseltine tells civil servants

Civil servants are being corrupted by the Government's party political propaganda machine, Michael Heseltine said yesterday. Anthony Bevins, Political Editor, reports on a call to arms.

Sir Robin Butler, head of the Home Civil Service, and the First Division Association of senior civil servants should resist with all their might Labour's attempt to politicise Whitehall, the former deputy prime minister said yesterday.

Speaking at a London conference on publishing, he said that the exodus of eight senior information officers since the election seemed more than a little careless on Labour's part.

As someone who had just left government, Mr Heseltine said he had worked with Whitehall information officers most days of his working week for the past 18 years, and he added: "There was the clearest understanding that their job was to present factual answers or policy guidance."

"They were not there to advocate or enhance the interests of the Conservative Party. I can never remember the understanding causing any tension or indeed misunderstanding."

Any half-experienced minister knew where party political advocacy took over from the defence of government policy.

he said, and, when it did, Conservative Central Office provided an excellent conduit to the media.

But Mr Heseltine said: "I deeply distrust any attempt now to blur the clear distinction that used to exist."

"There can be only one purpose behind the Labour Government's determination to politicise the Government Information Service," he added. "That purpose is to use their press officers to distribute propaganda as opposed to information."

"It is a corrupting process that will inevitably draw the civil service deeply into party politics. It is not possible to draw a line in the sand between the civil servants who would work for this new breed of party hacks and the hacks themselves."

Mr Heseltine warned that the process would stimulate leaks, and bring an inevitable retaliatory backlash from the next Tory government.

"This unwelcome and divisive process will encourage civil servants unsympathetic to the government to leak contrary information to balance the books," he said.

"It will encourage any subsequent government to demand the resignation of men and women known to have been sympathetic to the outgoing regime."

"It will bring into question the traditional independence of the Civil Service, particularly at election times."

Campaigners back animal test ban



Farewell to death row: Animals will be saved from testing for cosmetic products

Campaigners yesterday welcomed the end of animal experiments to test cosmetic products. The move was seen as an important step, even though it will only save about a tenth of the 2,800 animals killed each year to test cosmetics.

In addition, 19,300 mice could be saved next year when the Government intends to ban them from being infected with diseases to produce vaccines.

Cosmetic testing only makes up a tiny fraction of the 2.7 million animal experiments carried out for medical reasons each year.

Anita Roddick, founder of the Body Shop, said: "At last we can celebrate a great first step after 21 years of campaigning."

— Jason Bennett

Clarke, Kinnock and Jenkins raise the euro banner

Kenneth Clarke, Neil Kinnock and Lord Jenkins yesterday joined forces to support the Euro. Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent, says the cross-party alliance could be storing up trouble for William Hague.

The heavyweight trio of the former Tory Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, the European Commissioner and former Labour leader, Neil Kinnock, and Lord Jenkins, the Liberal Democrat leader in the House of Lords, yesterday joined forces to promote a cross-party alliance in support of a pro-European campaign, including the single currency.

The three were made vice-presidents of the European Movement, a cross-party grouping which includes back-bench MPs from the three main parties and is dedicated to promoting Britain's interests in Europe.

Mr Clarke made a rallying call to other pro-Europeans across Britain to join the campaign. It came as he told a London conference of pro-European Tory MPs that the Conservative Party should not lurch towards "more fundamentalist" policies in a bid to distinguish itself from Labour.

He said the Government had made a series of mistakes on economic policy and said the

Tories needed to re-establish themselves as the party of market economics.

Leaders of Conservative Mainstream strongly denied their conference was the beginning of a "party within a party" to challenge the more Euro-sceptic leadership of William Hague.

There were also concerted efforts to damp down speculation of a break-away and a rebellion next week by pro-Tory Europeans when the party leadership has insisted on a three-line whip to vote against the Government on the Amsterdam treaty.

The Positive European group, led by Peter Temple-Morris, the Tory MP who recently defected to Labour, have decided as a group to back Mr Hague in voting against the Government, although some Conservative MPs may still abstain.

That could avoid a confrontation with the Tory leadership, and talk of Tory MPs losing the whip for refusing to vote with Mr Hague was being dismissed last night at Westminster.

However, the determination of the group to challenge the leadership line on Europe was reaffirmed by Lord Howe, another former Chancellor. He attacked Mr Hague's rejection of the single currency for 10 years as a "purpose-free piece of ideological posturing" which was neither in Britain's national interest nor in the interests of the Conservative Party.

MILLIONS FACE STARVATION IN NORTH KOREA



This winter may prove to have devastating consequences for the people of North Korea. For the third consecutive year, a combination of floods and drought has ruined harvests and destroyed homes. In parts of the country, children are already having to live on a diet of tree bark and roots. Without urgent help, many will not survive the bitter cold of the North Korean winter.

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Sir Isaiah Berlin

Isaiah Berlin, philosopher and historian of ideas; born Riga, Latvia 6 June 1909; Lecturer, New College, Oxford 1932-38, Fellow 1938-50; Fellow, All Souls College, Oxford 1932-38, 1950-64, 1975-77; CBE 1946; Chichele Professor of Social and Political Theory, Oxford University 1957-67; FBA 1957; Kt 1957; Vice-President, British Academy 1959-61; President 1974-78; President of Wolfson College, Oxford 1966-75; Professor of Humanities, City University of New York 1966-71; OM 1971; married 1956 Anne Halban (née of Gunzbourg; three stepsons); died Oxford 5 November 1997.

Isaiah Berlin was one of the most remarkable men of his time, and one of the leading liberal thinkers of the century. Philosopher, political theorist, historian of ideas, Russian, Englishman, Jew; essayist, critic, teacher; he was a man of formidable intellectual power with a rare gift for understanding a wide range of human motives, hopes and fears, and a prodigiously energetic capacity for enjoyment – of life, of people in all their variety, of their ideas and idiosyncrasies, of literature, of music, of art.

His defence and refinement of what he saw as the most essential conception of freedom has achieved classic status, and the presence and character of this conception in the modern mind is due in no small measure to him. He also identified and developed, with considerable originality, a pluralist view of ultimate human ideals that supports his liberal stance, and deserves to become just as deeply embedded in our outlook.

In contrast to the great majority of ideologies and creeds, he argued that not all values can be jointly realised in one life, or in a single society or period of history, and that many ideals cannot even be compared on a common scale; so that there can be no single objective ranking of ends, no uniquely right set of principles by which to live.

From this it follows not only that people should be free (within the crucial but rather broad limits set by the demands of sheer humanity), both individually and collectively, to adopt their own guiding priorities and visions of life; but also, perhaps more radically, that a perfect, frictionless society, as well as being impossible in practice, is in principle incoherent as an ideal. Insights of this kind may seem startling to some today, but this Berlin maintained, is a more recent, less widespread and less secure development than might be supposed; it is also a benevolent one, and may be laid partly at his door.

Like other great men he was a catalyst of excellence. Those who have had the good fortune to know him can testify to the strikingly positive, enlarging, warming experience of being in his company and listening to his irrepressible flow of captivating talk. He was legendary as a talker both for his brilliant rapid, syllable-swallowing diction and for his imitable range – he was astonishingly widely read in a number of languages; he knew (and deeply influenced) a great many prominent men and women in England and elsewhere, and he peppered his conversation and writings with a bewilderingly cascade of names. (This was not name-dropping; the names were a shorthand for their bearers' ideas.)

Though he spent his whole professional life, apart from his war service, as an Oxford academic, he did not suffer from parochialism, and moved with equal ease in the many worlds he inhabited, often simultaneously, surviving day after day, without flagging, punishing schedule of commitments and diversions. He lectured to learned and distinguished audiences in many countries, talked to undergraduate societies (not only in Oxford), colleges of education and sixth forms, and gave generously of his time to the growing number of those who made demands on it: former students with problems, scholars studying his work, strangers who sought his advice or help in connection with projects of their own.

He was often heard on the radio,

especially the Third Programme, and gave numerous interviews, particularly to foreign journalists. He positively relished what others would have found intolerable pressures and, though he was perfectly serious when the occasion demanded, brought a sometimes impish sense of fun to everything that he undertook.

He was not, and would not have wished to be any kind of saint, but he had in abundance what he called in others "moral charm". This quality was particularly striking in his manner of conversation, which could unsettle those new to it. He did not stick to the point, but would sit back, look up, and follow his interest where it led, happily digressing, digressing from digressions, and unceremoniously returning to the topic of his own previous remarks, or changing the subject, apparently oblivious of what his interlocutor may have been saying, even at some length, in the interim.

This last idiosyncrasy might have

seemed impolite in other hands, but in him it was clearly unselfconscious, and demonstrated his absorption in the issue before his mind, which he would pursue almost playfully, often in odd directions. Although talking to him made one's mind race, it could be infuriating if one wanted to sort out some problem and come to a clear conclusion, and he was not always an attentive listener – sometimes because he had a shrewd idea of what one was going to say before one had said it.

He had no taste for purely verbal word-play, but his wit, in the wider sense, was matchless. He could be bewilderingly quick on the uptake, and equally quick with an illuminating response. He was refreshingly direct and, for a man of his generation, unusually open: he made the obsessive circumspection of some parts of the Oxford establishment seem mean and life-denying by comparison. Gossip and anecdote abounded, but not malevolently: indeed, he was virtually incapable of innuendo, and did not seek to score points. Even when he propounded an unfavourable view of someone, it could seem more like a move in a game than a damning judgement.

He loved ranking people, and sorting them into types: most famously, hedgehogs and foxes – those in the grip of a single, all-embracing vision as against those who are more receptive to variousness. Indeed, his taste for light-hearted categorisation was an informal manifestation of his ability to extract and display the essence of a person or a difficult writer.

As a lecturer he had complete command of his material, and was spellbinding to listen to (fortunately several of his lectures were recorded, and can be heard at the National Sound Archive). He was consciously but not self-consciously Jewish, and a lifelong Zionist: his views counted for a good deal in Israel. He was a director of Covent Garden and a devoted opera-goer; he was a trustee of the National Gallery. He did not lack recognition – a knighthood, the OM, many honorary doctorates, the Mellon Lectureship, the Presidency of the British Academy, the Jerusalem, Erasmus, Agnelli and Lippincott Prizes – but always protested that he was being given more than his due, that his achievements had been systematically overestimated. He was larger than life, entirely sui generis, a phenomenon, irreplaceable.

Isaiah Berlin was born in 1909 to Russian-speaking Jewish parents in Riga, capital of Latvia. His father, Mendel, owned a timber business (chiefly providing sleepers for the Russian railways); he and his wife Marie were lively, cultured people, enthusiastically interested in the arts. They bequeathed their enthusiasm in full measure to their only surviving child, whose love of music in particular, especially but by no means only opera, was a thread of deep and growing importance to him which ran through his life from boyhood onwards.

In 1915 the German army was closing on Riga, and the Berlins moved to Russia. They lived first in Archangel, then, from 1917, in Petrograd, where in that year Isaiah witnessed both the Social-Democratic



Berlin painted by Derek Hill, 1973. 'Probably my most enjoyable sittings,' said Hill to Grey Gowrie (*Derek Hill: an appreciation*, Quartet Books, 1987), 'were with Sir Isaiah Berlin... Conversations ranged from theatre in Russia in the Thirties to life with Bernard Berenson interspersed with: "Now do I have my right leg over my left leg or my left leg over my right leg?"'

and the Bolshevik Revolutions. On one occasion he saw a terrified, white-faced man being dragged and kicked through the streets by a mob; this was a formative experience which left him with an ineradicable loathing of any form of violence. In 1920 the Berlins returned to Latvia, under a treaty with the Communists, and Mendel decided to move to England, where he had friends and business connections.

Arriving in early 1921, they lived first in Surbiton, then in London, in Kensington. After prep school Isaiah went to St Paul's and, without ever losing touch with his Russian Jewish identities, continued a thoroughgoing process of Anglicisation that enabled him to become a prominent figure in the English culture of his day.

In 1928 he went up as a scholar to Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He took Firsts in Greats and PPE in 1931 and 1932. Thereafter he was interviewed (unsuccessfully) for the Manchester Guardian and started to read for the Bar; but Richard Crossman, then a don at New College, gave him his first post, as a lecturer in philosophy. Almost immediately he was also elected to a fellowship at All Souls which ran concurrently with his lectureship until 1938, when he became a fellow of New College. It was during this first spell at All Souls that he wrote his brilliant biographical study of Marx (*Karl Marx: his life and environment*, 1939) for the Home University Library: ironically he was by no means the editors' first choice for the job.

By the end of the war Berlin had decided that he wanted to give up philosophy for the history of ideas, "a field in which one could hope to know more at the end of one's life

than when one had begun". In 1950, with this in view, he returned to All Souls, where in 1957 he was elected to the Chichele chair of Social and Political Theory in succession to G.D.H. Cole. His inaugural lecture, *Two Concepts of Liberty*, is his best-known and most influential work, in which with great passion and subtlety he stands up for "negative" liberty – freedom from obstruction by others' freedom to follow one's own choices – and shows how easily "positive" liberty, the (desirable) freedom of self-mastery, is perverted into the "freedom" to achieve "self-realisation" according to criteria laid down and often forcibly imposed by self-appointed arbiters of the true ends of human life.

Berlin has written most engagingly about aspects of these years; in particular, his descriptions of his meetings in Russia with Boris Pasternak, Anna Akhmatova and other writers are extremely moving. His encounter with Anna Akhmatova had an especially profound effect on him; and the many passages about him in Akhmatova's poems bear witness to its fundamental significance for her. "He will not be a beloved husband to me! But what we accomplish, he and I, will disturb the Twentieth Century": she was convinced that there was a direct link between Stalin's reaction to their meeting in 1945 and the beginning of the Cold War in 1946.

During the early years of the Second World War, Berlin continued to teach. Then, in 1941, he was sent to New York by the Ministry of Information. In 1942 he was transferred to the Foreign Office, which he served until 1946 (apart from a few months in Moscow) at the British Embassy in Washington as head of a team charged with reporting the changing political mood of the United States. The despatches sent to Whitehall from Washington, not in his name but mostly drafted by him, attracted the attention of Winston Churchill, and have long had a reputation for their brilliance: a selection was published (*as Washington Despatches 1941-1945*, edited by H.G. Nicholas) in 1981.

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The year before his election to the chair, abandoning his apparently settled bachelor existence, he had married Alina Halban (daughter of the eminent European banker Pierre de Gunzbourg), perfectly described by Lord Goodman as "a lady of grace and distinction". In his late forties he had found the partner who would be the linchpin of his life from that time onwards; and, in his three stepsons (he had no chil-

dren of his own), a mutually devoted family. He always recommended marriage to others.

In 1966 Berlin became the first President of the newly founded Oxford graduate college, Wolfson, relinquishing his professorship the following year. Wolfson College, where he remained until his "retirement" in 1975, came into existence in its present form and under its present name (it began as Ifley College) only as a result of his efficacy as fund-raiser and charismatic inspirer of new institutional forms, traditions and loyalties. The generosity of the Wolfson and Ford Foundations in funding the building and endowment of the college was in direct response to his personal involvement.

Wolfson apart, Berlin's chief legacy to the future is what he wrote: a large, enormously varied oeuvre of unmistakable style and penetration. In his own, reasonable, estimation his most important work is represented by his exploration of four fields of enquiry: liberalism; pluralism; 19th-century Russian thought; and the origins and development of the Romantic movement. Under all these headings he shed much new light, and the way he did so still retains the power to excite which it had when his contributions were first made public.

For most of his life his reputation as a writer lagged behind his actual output, much of which was in the form of occasional essays ("I am like a taxi: I have to be hailed"), often published obscurely. Comparative little had appeared in book form – principally *Karl Marx. The Hedgehog and the Fox* (1953, a long essay on Tolstoy's view of history) and the collection *Four Essays on Liberty* (1969), which included his inaugural lecture. But then in 1976 came *Vico and Herder*, and shortly thereafter four volumes of collected essays (1978-80).

These books gave the lie to a remark made by his friend Maurice Bowra when Berlin was appointed to the Order of Merit in 1971: "Though like Our Lord and Socrates he does not publish much, he thinks and says a great deal and has had an enormous influence on our times." Other volumes followed in the 1980s, including two devoted to work he had left unpublished when it was first written, and, in February this year, *The Proper Study of Mankind*, a retrospective anthology of his best work.

By contrast with Bowra's case, a good deal of Berlin's way of speaking is captured, happily, in his published work, which is imbued with his personality and sets forth his cardinal intellectual preoccupations with the greatest clarity and fecundity, if often through the medium of his enquiries into the ideas of others.

One of the most attractive characteristics of his writing is that he is never merely the detached scholar, never forgotten that the point of the enquiry, in the end, is to increase understanding and moral insight. Since, as another friend, Noël Annan, put it, "He will always use two words where one will not do", his message – a notion he would have hated – is impossible to summarise without losing all of its characteristic mode of expression. But its central content can hardly be stated.

Berlin once described the main burden of his work as "distrust of all claims to the possession of incorrigible knowledge about issues of fact or principle in any sphere of human behaviour". His most fundamental conviction, which he applauded when he discerned it in the writings of others, and adopted in an enriched form as his own, was that there can never be any single, universal, final, complete, demonstrable answer to the most ultimate moral question of all: How should men live? This he presents as a claim to the possession of incorrigible knowledge about issues of fact or principle in any sphere of human behaviour". His most fundamental conviction, which he applauded when he discerned it in the writings of others, and adopted in an enriched form as his own, was that there can never be any single, universal, final, complete, demonstrable answer to the most ultimate moral question of all: How should men live?

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Each individual, each culture, each nation, each historical period has its own goals and standards, and these cannot be combined, practically or theoretically, into a single coherent overarching system in which all ends are fully realised without loss, compromise or clashes. The same tension exists within each individual consciousness. More equality may mean less excellence, or less liberty; justice may obstruct mercy; honesty may exclude kindness; self-knowledge may impair creativity or happiness; efficiency inhibit spontaneity. But these are not temporary local difficulties: they are general, indebt and sometimes tragic features of the moral landscape; tragedy, indeed, far from being the result of avoidable error, is an endemic feature of the human condition. Instead of a splendid synthesis there must be a permanent, at times painful, piecemeal process of untidy trade-offs and careful balancings of contradictory claims.

Intimately connected with this pluralist thesis – sometimes mistaken for relativism, which he rejected, and which is in fact quite distinct – is a belief in freedom from interference, especially by those who think they know better, that they can choose for us in a more enlightened way than we can choose for ourselves.

Berlin's pluralism justifies his deep-seated rejection of coercion and manipulation by authoritarians and totalitarianists of all kinds: Communists, Fascists, bureaucrats, missionaries, terrorists, revolutionaries and all other despots, levellers, sympathisers or purveyors of "organised happiness". Like one of his heroes, the Russian thinker Alexander Herzen, many of whose characteristics he manifested himself, Berlin had a horror of the sacrifices that have been exacted in the name of Utopian ideals due to be realised at some unspecified point in the distant future: real people should never have to suffer and die today for the sake of a chimera of eventual universal bliss.

Berlin always discussed these ideas in terms of specific individuals, not in the abstract, remembering that it is the impact of ideas on people's lives that give them the point. Here he was served by his unusual capacity for imaginative identification with people whose vision of life varied greatly and were often distant from his own. This enables him to write rich and convincing accounts of a wide range of figures historical and contemporary: Belinsky, Hamann, Herder, Herzen, Machiavelli, Maistre, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Victor Churchill, Namier, Ross, Weizmann; and many others.

His descriptions of those with whom he is in the closest sympathy often have a marked autobiographical resonance: he said of others, with dazzling virtuosity, what he would not have been willing to say of himself, though his words sometimes fit him precisely. Had he been sufficiently interested in his life and opinions for their own sakes, he would have been his own ideal biographer; but he would also have been a different man.

Isaiah Berlin was often described especially in his old age, by means of superlatives: the world's greatest talker, the century's most inspiring reader, one of the finest minds of our time – even, indeed, a genius. It may be too early to be sure about such strong claims. But there is no doubt that he showed in more than one direction the unexpectedly large possibilities open to us at the top end of the range of human potential, and the power of the wisely directed intellect to illuminate, without undue solemnity or needless obscurity, the ultimate moral questions that face mankind.

– Henry Hardy

BIRTHS

JAGGERS: On 23 October to Richard and Rebecca, a daughter, Isabel Catherine, a sister to Thomas.

DEATHS

BERLIN: On 5 November at the Addenbrooke Hospital, Cambridge. Sir Isaiah Berlin, aged 88. Husband of Alice and stepfather of Michel Strauss, Peter Hallinan and Philippe Hallinan. Funeral private.

FALL: John Anderson died peacefully on 23 October aged 87 at home in Wiltshire. Private cremation to be announced.

LAZAR: Leonard on Tuesday 4 November, barrister, poet and musician, died aged 86. Burial at Kermel Chapel, Penrith Crematorium, Penrith, Wednesday 12 November, 12.30pm.

MARRIAGES & DEATHS

Inquiries to F.D.: R.D. Burroughs, Penzance, telephone 01736 304062.

IN MEMORIAM

HEATHER-HAYES: Jim. Died tragically 7 July 1982, aged 18. Remembered with love on his birthday.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS may be submitted to the Editor, The Independent, 11th Floor, Finsbury Square, London EC2M 7AS. Tel: 0171-220 2000 or fax 0171-220 2001. £100 for each notice. £100 for each obituary.

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Birthdays

Mr Ian Bakewell, racehorse trainer, 59;

19/FEATURES

You are (probably) still gay if you ...



JOHN LYTTLE

Mirror, mirror: every day it gets a little harder to know if you're gay or not. Camp Children's TV does it better than Julian Clary. Culture-defining harbingers of polymorphous perversity and gender abdication? Please: the nation has the Teletubbies. Red ribbons? Too passé. Signs and signifiers once thought fixed are going, going, gone. So don't be surprised if this last gasp list becomes either out-of-date or, indeed, wholly redundant long before you reach the end.

Aren't sure if cocktails should be drunk or told:
Own a can of nipple polish;
Laugh all the way through *Platoon*;
Wonder if Donna Summer will ever have that recipe again, oh no;

Have already seen *Chicago*;
Are impatient for the dance remixes of "Candle in the Wind":

Never use wire coat hangers, ever;
Get out of the shower, wrap a towel around your head and imitate Whitney Houston in the bathroom mirror (Oh, right, sure you haven't...);

Think nothing of:

Shaving your chest, waxing your back, taking a Fly-mo to your lobes, or staying in the entire weekend if you get a spot;

Know all the words to "I Am Sixteen (Going on Seventeen)":

Speak two languages: English and Gucci;

Have told the builders to install a trap-door beside your bed;

Can discuss Uma Thurman's work in *Batman and Robin* in a rich, deep and meaningful way;

Are never tempted to jump up and touch the awning;

Spent four years painting one ceiling (see: Michelangelo);

Tell people that Clint Eastwood played Dorothy in *The Golden Girls*. Well, has anyone ever seen him and Bea Arthur in the same room?

Spell boys with a "z";

Can always find a good reason to buy yet another tight black top;

Have suggested a threesome on the first date;

Named the cats Lorna and Liza;

Know your ankles like the backs of your hands;

Own more than five items made of:

leather
latex

rubber;

Remove the Mapplethorpe prints when Mummy visits;

Are confused when people use Crisco for cooking;

Check out every mirror you pass;

Have women friends;

Believe your taste is impeccable, even when it's bad;

Are willing to dash all the way home just to spray some Impulse Spice behind your knees;

Have subscriptions to *GQ*, *Men's Health*, *Hello!*, *Metropolitan Home*, *Variety* and *Boy Slaves*;

Read your godchildren *Jenny Lives With Eric and Martin* at bedtime;

Know that the jockstrap was invented by Parvo Nakacheke;

Own a "drag bag", a tasty-cum-lucky frock, some lipbie, a little pantie, a push-up bra, perhaps pearls and high heels... Just the basics for the occasional girl's night out;

Believe pork is a verb;

Are a regular sufferer of "weepy Wednesday", the tearful midweek comedown from last Saturday's drug'n'dancing extravaganza (for your information and safety, it is best not to be served by staff at certain London fashion emporiums while they are in this condition). Unless you enjoy having your purse flung back in your face accompanied by a cry of "You look really crap in this and I haven't had my lunch break yet");

Think *Philadelphia* was cheesy;

Bought the 1998 *Tale That* calendar (think about it);

Have a soft spot for Princess Margaret;

Know Mrs Overall's first name;

Are the only person at the dinner table to have had their piercings removed;

Can't remember what Peter Andre's face looks like;

Have grown emotionally attached to your sex toys;

Find yourself seriously debating Dannii vs Kylie;

Don't mind grey days, as it's this season's colour;

Queued at Our Price this Monday to buy Dion and Streisand's "Tell him";

Are still in mourning for *Dynasty*.

Phew. Give that woman a decoration



Linda Barker: 'Once I start decorating it would take a bit of an earthquake or a major tantrum to shake me from my vision'

Photographs: Adrian Dennis

Linda Barker could revolutionise your sitting-room with a few sheets of MDF, a pot of lilac paint and an old tree branch. The star of the TV series 'Changing Rooms' invited Ann Treneman for a good nose around her own house in south London.

Linda Barker is not just any interior designer. She is a star of the hit BBC programme *Changing Rooms* and the author of almost a dozen books. She knows how to do amazing things with MDF and only needs a few hits of copper pipe to make a four-poster bed. She manages to make DIY look sexy and has a lot to teach a woman like myself who views putting up a shelf as a major engineering project. But I am not in the mood to learn as I stand on her doorstep in deepest SE23. I am in the mood to snoop.

I have always been a décor voyeur, but then I think most of us are. Witness those people who spend all their free time going round houses on the pretext that they may be buyers. In reality, of course, they are frantically clocking the paint effects and wondering if they too shouldn't try a dado this year. All readers of *Hello!* are décor voyeurs – the words are just wallpaper for the wallpaper, really – and so are each and every one of the six million or

so viewers of *Changing Rooms*. The programme follows two sets of neighbours as they transform a room in each other's homes, each egged on by a designer.

"The British are very nosy people," says Linda Barker. "People love to be nosy and the programme lets them into people's houses."

I nod, but my mind is really on her kitchen. It is light, airy, sunny. "Is that rag-rolled?" I ask, looking at a wall that seems to be dappled. "Frescoed," she says, explaining about how you do four coats and it's no trouble, really. A hand-painted olive branch drifts across one wall. The only sign of her five-year-old daughter, Jessica, are some chocolate fingers set out on the bleached wood island that serves as a sort of giant chopping board. I nibble on one and then another.

"Did you do this yourself?" I ask in a small voice. "Hmm, yes, the whole house really."

At this point, I abandon all attempts at interviewing her about the book she has just written on *Changing Rooms* and ask for a tour. She complies and is obviously a bit of a pro at this. She and her husband moved to the large Victorian house in Forest Hill from a tiny flat in Battersea. It has five bedrooms, high ceilings and wide hallways. It came with the proviso that it needed modernisation. In the end, it needed a whole lot more than that – Linda spares me the details, it is clear that it was not a picnic – but now it is pretty ab-fab by any standard.

But I have also figured out that Linda herself is a bit of a designaholic. After our interview she is heading off to Winchester to record another television programme, called *Change That*, in which she has four hours to transform a piece of furniture. She is an art school graduate who is now 36 and having too much fun. She doesn't like to stand still or look back, particularly. The thrill is in the doing.

She has just finished filming the new series of *Changing*

Rooms that will be shown in January.

"I just love the fast turnaround of design. For me it's a bit of a dream, being given a room and being told to throw £500 at it, design it, change it as much as you can. That is a joy."

She thrives on deadlines – three rooms in her own home only got done on time because they were going to be photographed for a magazine the next day – and diversity. "I mean, for

budget of £500. This requires a lot of people-skills and elbow grease and makes for compulsive viewing."

Linda insists that there are rarely any real problems, though, with prodding, she does admit to the occasional tiff.

There was the one time when the couple hated the room and said so, on camera. Then there was a bit of a controversy about a branch she'd hung on the ceiling to dangle lights through. "I mean, for

und-groove wall panelling that we'd spent ages on. The woman was very anxious about the colour and got a little bit sulky."

So sulky, in fact, that she put down her paintbrush and went into a huddle with her husband, bad-mouthing the colour. Of course, Linda knew that it would be fine (which it was) as soon as the fabric with the red was added to the room.

The worst is when even the crew starts to doubt her vision. Linda herself never does – except for the time she decided the shade of lilac really was too much like a bar of soap – and sticks to her original plan like

sticke

By the time I have come round to decorating it would take a bit of an earthquake, really, or a major tantrum to shake me from my vision. So, yeah, I am very confident. Thank God, or I would be a quivering wreck."

It is at this moment that I realise *Changing Rooms* would make me a quivering wreck. The book shows 16 room makeovers and it is worrying that I feel more comfortable with some of the "before" pictures. I have visions of my nice (but sad) primrose kitchen being turned into something exciting, hot and Mexican. This is a tough game.

I realise, though I can't help but take a final snoop at her lovely green hall with matt black radiators as I leave.

Linda Barker's *'Changing*

Rooms' is published by BBC Books at £16.99.



this new series I did a Caribbean houseboat. That was fantastic. People let us into their rooms and allow us to do whatever!"

Not quite. What actually happens on *Changing Rooms* is that the neighbours tell a designer like Linda what they think the people who actually live there would like. The designer then goes away and comes up with a plan that can be achieved in two days with a

needed something dramatic up there. I'd spent all my money already so I did that," she said. In the end, she says, they came round.

Then there is the delicate matter of the couple she is working with. "They can get worried and want you to adapt colours, say. I can think of one time that I had picked a blue.

It was very tasteful and we were painting it below a dado. We had done this fake tongue-

it around from time to time). On the mantelpiece: some talc, some rings, a foolish-looking knitted rabbit and a polystyrene head with a wig on it. bought just in case and luckily (!) not needed. There is a box of bargain jewels... but no scarf.

Janet's Last Book by Allan Ahlberg, published this week by Penguin at £9.99

To Felicity she left turquoise shoes. To Rose, a scarf

janet ahlberg, magical illustrator of children's books, died in 1994, age 50, of breast cancer. Her husband/collaborator Allan Ahlberg has made a new book about her and her work. This is how he begins...

It is September, nine o'clock one morning. I have taken up her breakfast tray: porridge, maple syrup, glass of milk, plus a few other things: Tylenol and Votarol for the pain, Zantac to

protect her stomach lining from some of the other drugs, Maxolon and Kyril for sickness after chemotherapy.

The sun comes in at the window. I pull up a chair and sit beside the bed. Janet sips her milk through a straw. She looks at me, mildly – her usual gaze, then past me, over my shoulder to something on the mantelpiece.

"Rose'd like that scarf," she says.

Some people, as their lives go by, acknowledge death, talk of it, let it out and look at it from time to time. Others, the majority perhaps, don't, preferring to stay mum. Jan was one of these. She had been gripped by breast cancer for almost two years. It had spread to her bones and now her liver. Well, she had read the books and BACUP pamphlets, was realis-

tic and knew the score. She had her massive fears and tiny hopes (until the very end), but nothing else. Until this day.

"Rose'd like that scarf," she said.

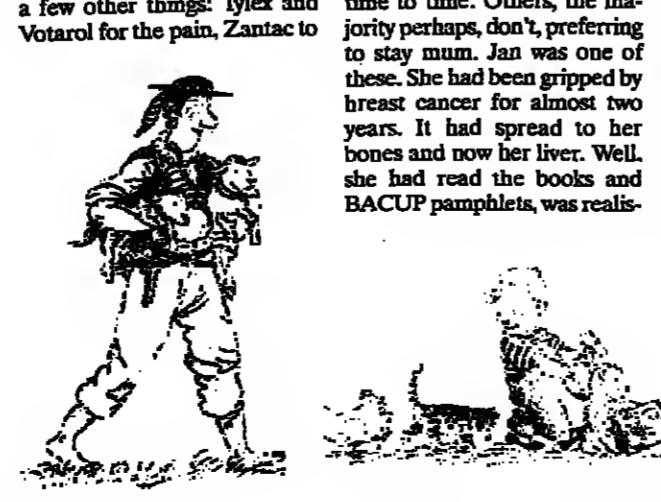
I knew entirely what she meant. It was her first request. So Jan began to deal with death. Typically, for her, she approached it first with presents. She had a small notebook, a page per person. Often the items were drawn as well as listed. There was, however, no particular system. The whole thing was simply driven by her powerful memory. She just recalled that someone once had expressed a liking for something "Byron Fish poster in studio", or was present when something else was bought: "Felicity: Turquoise shoes with heels and bow".

Janet dealt with death, faced it, hated it. She didn't want to leave; the party was still going on. There was a manuscript waiting, proofs in the pipeline, a plaintive cat stationed by the fridge and *Red Dwarf* on the telly. Most of all, of course, there was Jessica (nearly fifteen), her

beloved daughter. The days passed. Janet's life was shrunk to a little patch, a few hours in the afternoon downstairs on the chesterfield.

A couple of times she spoke of her own funeral. Jan was not religious. She wanted a secular ceremony and burial in the local cemetery. It was her wish that family and friends would gather together, sing a bit and speak for her. She wasn't solemn either. At one point, smiling her slight, shy smile, she said, "Tell Graham he's allowed to say 'bum'" (guaranteed with her to get a laugh).

It's February now. Janet has been dead three months. In the bedroom her last-worn clothes hang over the end of the bed, her numerous shoes still clutter the floor and her perfume lingers (mainly because I spray



20/LEADER & LETTERS

Brown envelopes or no, Parliament cannot police itself



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'People's opera'

Sir: Surely, if a "people's opera" means anything, it means providing world-class performances of a wide range of operas at prices that do not exclude anyone from attending. You don't create such a thing by more than halving the number of performances by the two main opera companies in London ("The death of the Royal Opera House", 4 November).

There are legitimate criticisms of the management of the Royal Opera House but the quality of the work produced there is genuinely world class. The companies deserve to be judged on the quality of their work, not simply on the quality of their management. Furthermore, despite popular misconceptions, at every performance of the Royal Opera there are a significant number of tickets available at £7 or less. I know, because I buy them. High prices in other parts of the House are entirely a result of the low level of public subsidy received by the company.

How will English National Opera continue to be as accessible as it is, in a theatre that has a third fewer seats? Either prices will go up or the range of the work it does will diminish. Without increased subsidy to all the companies, prices will remain high.

By effectively making these companies homeless, the talent brought together in all three companies will drift away to companies and countries that take the arts seriously. An operatic heritage of over 50 years will be destroyed and we will all be the poorer for it.

DAVID CLOKE

London SE4

Sir: One point has yet to be made with regard to Chris Smith's suggestion to make Covent Garden a "receiving house" for three major companies. Such a plan would make the Royal Ballet's position insupportable.

It has always suffered from having to share the house with an opera company, thus having to restrict the number of its performances and being too often (for instance) unable to give aspirant dancers the opportunity to dance major roles in London. The company's need for its own dance house in London has for many years

Is it not time for Neil Hamilton to get off the stage? After all, we know what we think about him. Anyone who has taken any time at all to follow his wrongdoings knows that he does not deserve to be an MP. Indeed, the electors of Tatton in Cheshire took that view and sent him for his pension on 1 May this year. As certain as British public opinion is that Louise Woodward is not guilty of pre-meditated murder, it is certain that Mr Hamilton is guilty of taking backhanders and lying about it.

End of story? Time to consign the bow-tied Thatcherite and his vengeful wife to the attic of parliamentary scandals, along with Jeremy Thorpe, Jack Profumo and John Stonehouse? Not quite.

Sure, he is guilty, but let us be clear what he is guilty of, and get it clear according to the rules of justice, because the House of Commons has stumbled in its attempt to hold its members to new, improved ethical standards. It almost de-

fies belief that MPs could have managed to mislead justice in the very case which forced the last government to appoint Lord Nolan in the first place.

The sleaze-busting peer himself was the model of restraint yesterday, commenting gently that his successor as the guardian of standards in public life, Sir Patrick Neill, will "no doubt" want to "look again at the procedure which the House of Commons has adopted in this case". Too right, he will. Instead of getting the miserable Mr Hamilton banged to rights, MPs have allowed him to complain – correctly – that he has been denied the right fully to challenge the evidence against him and to appeal against the findings.

This matters, not simply because Mr Hamilton, however unpopular, is entitled to a fair trial, but because the issue so dominated the early stages of the general election campaign earlier this year, and helped turn a landslide into a Labour

landslide. If Labour's electoral advantage were built on an injustice, democracy has been tarnished.

Let us rehearse the central facts. In 1994, after the "cash for questions" scandal broke, John Major asked Lord Nolan to rewrite the rules on ethical standards in public life. Sir Gordon Downey was appointed as a kind of investigating magistrate on behalf of a "court" of MPs on the Standards and Privileges Committee.

The election intervened while Sir Gordon compiled his 900-page report, and the voters were treated to the pathetic spectacle of the Prime Minister trying to force Mr Hamilton to resign and then, instead of disowning him, declaring him "innocent until proved guilty". Mr Hamilton was unfit to be an MP on the grounds of the offences which he admitted: failing to declare a stay at the Ritz or an interest in the tobacco products he promoted, and lying to the

Deputy Prime Minister when cornered. So Mr Hamilton in particular, and the Tories in general, deserved to suffer the electoral consequences.

But on the most serious charge, that of taking thousands of pounds in brown envelopes from Mohamed Al Fayed, the owner of Harrods, Mr Major was right, and that remains the position today. Mr Hamilton is only guilty by association with Tim Smith, the Tory MP who admitted taking money in similar circumstances. Otherwise, it is Mr Hamilton's word against Mr Al Fayed's.

In spite of the fact that the only witnesses to the alleged transactions were Mr Al Fayed's employees, Sir Gordon found that there was "compelling evidence" that Mr Hamilton took the money. In yesterday's report, the committee of MPs contradicted the Commissioner. There can be no absolute proof that such payments were, or were not, made. So was Mr Hamilton to receive the benefit of "reasonable doubt"? No. Boldly facing both ways, the committee declared that it "did not arrive at a practicable way of reaching a judgment which adds to or subtracts from the Commissioner's findings". A masterpiece of evasion, and a conclusive, final argument for the policing of ethical standards to be taken out of the hands of MPs.

The committee was under an obligation to reach a conclusion one way or the other, if necessary by re-examining witnesses already interviewed by Sir Gordon. If they think that would be a waste of time and public money, they should acquit Mr Hamilton and draw attention to all the other misdemeanours he has admitted. If they think he took the money, then they should say so and give him the right of appeal. The defects of a system in which MPs are expected to police themselves remain fundamental. What do they want? Bring in the judges?

LETTERS



Foxhunting

Sir: Henry Best's argument (Letters, 6 November) essentially boils down to: "we shouldn't ban foxhunting because we cannot ban everything that is cruel or distasteful". But what is wrong with starting somewhere? Granted, people should be allowed certain freedoms – but the nature of living in a democratic society is having to conform to what is good for the majority as well as the individual.

In addition, it surprises me that foxhunting is not classed as "deliberately cruel" but boxing (a sport involving two paid consenting adults) is.

Perhaps many people do choose not to become vegans.

Maybe the same people do not research thoroughly all the ethical intentions of the companies they purchase products from. This does not mean that they have no right to express an opinion on a matter which emotionally affects them at the time. This is not hypocritical – this is human.

SHARON OTOO
Egham, Surrey

Sir: Concern about foxhunting smacks not only of hypocrisy but also of almost total ignorance of nature's unpleasant realities and a compulsion to see animals only through the eyes of Beatrix Potter.

If foxhunting is banned, no-one should imagine that the lot of the fox will have been improved. But then, one suspects that that is hardly the point.

STEPHEN MULLINER
Haslemere, Surrey

Inconvenient though it may be for the campaign against foxhunting, animal suffering is a much greater evil than animal death. If conducted properly, foxhunting and the other blood sports are capable of delivering quicker and more humane deaths to their quarry than they would otherwise suffer in the wild.

If foxhunting is banned, no-one should imagine that the lot of the fox will have been improved. But then, one suspects that that is hardly the point.

J A DAVIS
Bookham, Surrey

Sir: Foxhunting consists of nothing more wicked than the use, under controlled conditions, of the fox's natural predators to maintain a natural balance. The aspect that seems to cause squeamish town dwellers so much anguish, the fact that once killed the fox is torn to pieces and eaten by the

pack, is in principle no different to what happens around 90 percent of dinner tables up and down the land every Sunday, at about midday.

It is possible that the two sides of the hunting, shooting and fishing brigade are: conveying the mistaken impression that they are all "lofts"; and tearing away the comforting veils of ahaïtoir, supermarket and clinging and giving town folk an uncomfortable glimpse of what *homo sapiens* really is – the most ruthlessly successful of all the predatory omnivores.

TONY RUSSELL
Stratton Audley, Oxfordshire

J A DAVIS
Bookham, Surrey

Sir: Is it not the case that the argument over foxhunting has gone far beyond the issue of animal welfare? A passion to win has been ignited; the opposing view must be defeated, no matter what. I suspect that if irrefutable evidence came to light proving that the fox suf-

fered no more than any other wild animal in the natural world, Mike Foster MP and his fans would choose to ignore the evidence. The scent of victory is in their nostrils and lynch-mob mentality has taken over from reason.

In such circumstances, rational argument gives way to guerrilla tactics. Millions of pounds are spent by both sides in a struggle for supremacy. The cause does not warrant this.

TONY RUSSELL
Stratton Audley, Oxfordshire

J A DAVIS
Bookham, Surrey

Sir: "The only test that exists for BSE and CJD involves examining the brain tissue from victims" writes Kate Watson-Smyth ("Scientists take step forward in battle against BSE", 6 November). Not so. A distinguished British virologist with an international reputation for the work he has been doing

since 1970, both here and in the United States, on the "Scrapie agent" first offered the Ministry of Agriculture a urine test for BSE as long ago as 1993 and many times since. His offers have mysteriously always been refused.

At the request of relatives he has carried out his test on 15 humans who were suffering from possible CJD and in all 15 he found the test to be positive. Subsequent post-mortems confirmed that all 15 did have CJD. Had this urine test been carried out on cattle it could have identified the infected animals, thus restricting the cull and avoiding three farmers' suicides, together with the loss to the UK of an estimated £4bn.

Why are we getting excited about a possible blood test which Zurich scientists may eventually elaborate when there is a urine test available already?

H C GRANT
London NW3

Test for CJD

Sir: "The only test that exists for BSE and CJD involves examining the brain tissue from victims" writes Kate Watson-Smyth ("Scientists take step forward in battle against BSE", 6 November). Not so. A distinguished British virologist with an international reputation for the work he has been doing

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RICHARD GIORDANO
Providence, Rhode Island

Louise Woodward

Sir: If Judge Hiller Zobel reduces the verdict on Louise Woodward to manslaughter (report, 6 November) he will have determined that the jury were wrong to bring in a murder verdict and that it cannot be allowed to stand.

But if the verdict of murder fails it means that Louise is not guilty of the crime she was charged with. If she is not guilty of the crime she was charged with, she should go free.

If the only way of repairing a wrong verdict is to replace it with one for an offence which was not put to the jury, why not find her guilty of jaywalking instead?

KEVIN MCGRATH
Harlow, Essex

Sir: Stephen Jakobi (Letters, 4 November) regrets the "loose-or-noose" option chosen by Louise Woodward. But if the jury Stephen Colwell is telling the truth, then Louise was not convicted because she chose "loose-or-noose", but because the jury culpably denied her that option.

Colwell says (report, 4 November) that if other charges had been available "then potentially manslaughter may have been the verdict" implying a reasonable doubt of murder, which should have led to acquittal. He says, "There's no way we could... say 'We think she did it, but we're going to let her go'", implying a prejudice in favour of conviction, regardless of the charge.

Whether Louise's option was a proper one or not, the jury never gave it to her. Instead they allowed themselves the most impermissible option of all. They tried Louise Woodward for manslaughter and then convicted her of murder.

JOHN HEWOOD
York

Sir: Referring to Judge Hiller Zobel's "controversial" article in *American Heritage magazine*, David Usborne suggests (4 November) that Zobel believes that the jury system is flawed. In fact his article was an endorsement of the jury system. Zobel wrote:

"At the request of relatives he has carried out his test on 15 humans who were suffering from possible CJD and in all 15 he found the test to be positive. Subsequent post-mortems confirmed that all 15 did have CJD. Had this urine test been carried out on cattle it could have identified the infected animals, thus restricting the cull and avoiding three farmers' suicides, together with the loss to the UK of an estimated £4bn."

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RICHARD GIORDANO
Providence, Rhode Island

'A Dance to the Music of Time' part two: 'Anyone here know Widmerpool?'



MILES
KINGTON

Yesterday I brought you the first half of a condensed version of *A Dance to the Music of Time*. It wasn't meant to be the first half – it was meant to be the whole thing – but as anyone who has ever tried to condense *A Dance to the Music of Time* will testify (which, I suppose, means just me and Hugh Whittemore) it does tend to go on a bit.

Anyway, on with the second half. Story so far: lots of old friends keep bumping into each other and asking if they know Widmerpool. They generally do, but don't like him. Meanwhile, everyone is getting older.

Cut to large rambling house. There is a sign outside: "This house was used in the filming of 'A Dance to the Music of Time', £2.50 entry Wednesdays and Fridays." The sign is hastily removed. Nick Jenkins, in demob suit, comes to the gate. His wife comes running up the drive.

Nick: Hello, darling, I'm back.
Isabel: Hello, darling. What sort of war did you have?

Woman: Do you know that dreadful man Widmerpool?

Pamela: I should do. I am married to him.

Woman: Oh, my dear, I am so sorry!

Pamela: Not half as sorry as I am. Do you know that painting by Poussin called

Dance to the Music of Time?

Woman: Poussin? That's French for chicken, isn't it? Can you imagine a British painter called Chicken?

Pamela: Well, we have painters called Constable and Sargent, and nobody thinks it's odd...

Widmerpool (banging a table with his fist): Could we have silence just for a moment? Thank you all for coming...

Nick Jenkins arrives, out of breath.

Nick: Hello, Nick.

Nick: I am sorry, I don't think...

Woman: It's Jean. We had an affair in the first episode.

Nick: Did we? I've got that episode unvideo but I haven't had a chance to watch it yet.

Widmerpool: ... and in conclusion may I say that I shall shortly be going bonkers and running off with a charismatic young man called Scorp!

Sir Magnus: Why?

Widmerpool: It's short for Scorpion, I believe.

Sir Magnus: No – why are you going bonkers and running off with this young man?

Widmerpool: Well, I'm not sure, but I think it's because Anthony Powell can't think of an ending.

Nick: And doesn't know anything about the Sixties.

Enter Bob Duporte, Odo Stevens, Nicolas Poussin, and everyone who is not there so far.

Poussin: Excusez moi, mais connaissez vous Widmerpool?

PAUL
VALLEY
ETHICAL
TRADING

Her Majesty's official Opposition is – where?

DONALD MACINTYRE
THE TORIES
AND EUROPE

In the House of Commons on Wednesday there were 12 questions asked of Tony Blair by Conservative MPs, five of them by the Leader of the Opposition. Every one was on Europe, and 11 of them on the perceived iniquities of the Social Chapter. This was no doubt regarded by the Tory whips' office as a triumph of the leader's orchestration that now regularly takes place in both the main parties on these occasions. Except that on that very day a clear embarrassment for the Government, perhaps the clearest since the election, had come to light: the decision, despite ministerial promises to the contrary, not to apply the ban on tobacco advertising to Formula One racing.

It seemed, on the face of it, a classic case both of promising what you couldn't deliver, and ducking a hard choice. It directly involved the Prime Minister, who had been personally lobbied by the motor-racing industry. Was it really such a triumph to ensure that not one solitary Opposition MP even tried to make him squirm on the issue?

To make it worse, nothing had happened to justify this sudden obsessive interest in the Social Chapter. Or, to put it more precisely, nothing had happened outside the Conservative Party. The Europhiles in the party who know better, and who regard the Amsterdam summit as having had an unimportant but reasonably positive outcome, have agreed to vote against the Amsterdam Treaty bill in the Commons next week. So the leadership is now seeking to demonstrate, at the expense of serious opposition to the Government, that it is back in charge of its own party. But surrender of the party's pro-Europeans on Amsterdam is tactical – and temporary. It was agreed this week by the Positive European Group of MPs, including Ken Clarke, on the grounds that it is better to save their fire for the more important battle: EMU. When that moment comes most of them, and certainly Clarke and Michael Heseltine, will vote with the Government rather than their own party.

The pro-Europeans' tactic is understandable. But it doesn't alter the symbolic importance of next week's three-line whip for the Tory leadership, and the large majority of Tory backbenchers who support it. Opposition to the treaty, if it is to be taken seriously, implies that a future Tory government would seek to alter its terms. Which happens to be in line with the long-held attachment of Michael Howard, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, to the idea of seeking to "renegotiate" Britain's membership of the EU in a way that would repatriate some powers from Brussels. In his speech at the Tory conference, Howard explicitly said: "We will not be afraid to look again at the powers exercised by Brussels." What does this mean in practice? Allies of Howard have argued, rather optimistically, that the UK would have the clout to negotiate new terms if there were a change of government. But

some of them have not, in private, shrank from the implication that it might have to be pursued under threat of withdrawal. If that threat is to mean anything, as Norman Lamont said in a ground-breaking speech two years ago, the threat might, under certain circumstances, have to be carried out.

Hague himself hasn't fully declared his hand on this. He hasn't himself yet said he would go into the next election demanding renegotiation of Amsterdam under threat of withdrawal. Some would say opposition to the treaty anyway implies that; in any case it is a mark-time treaty (at worst) that preserves intact the objectives of the previous government: border controls and the right of member states to make their own foreign policy. Opposition to it suggests a new depth of hostility to the EU as it has existed since John Major reached his deal at Maastricht.

And here there are two fundamental problems. The first is the sort of target Blair is in relation to Europe, as opposed to what the Tories will vainly try to represent him as being. If you listen to Robin Cook giving evidence to the Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee, as he did this week, saying that Amsterdam represents an "improvement" on the integrationist designs of Maastricht; or, if you read Gordon Brown's submission to last month's ECOFIN, with its emphasis on labour market flexibility, Europe-wide competitiveness and the need for small and medium-sized businesses to prosper, it becomes harder to depict the British government as selling out to obsolete and integrationist EU corporatism. Indeed his hard-nosed approach to excessive labour market regulation – including reduced working hours – has already irritated the French government. The last time Jacques Chirac met Blair before yesterday was at a lunch in Strasbourg last month. The French President remarked to the company: "Tony est un socialiste moderne. Il est cinq kilomètres à droite de moi." (There are unconfirmed rumours that Blair replied: "Oui Jacques – et j'en suis fier" – Yes, and I'm proud of it.) On most EU issues, Blair is closer to mid-Eighties Thatcher than to the Europhiles caricature his opponents seek to conjure.

The other, related problem is public opinion. Even if you were to grant the Tory leadership's improbable claim that they could win an EMU referendum against a formidable cross-party coalition of the biggest figures in British politics, that certainly doesn't apply to EMU membership itself. Not only have the alleged defects of Amsterdam had zero impact on public opinion, but MORI's Bob Worcester points out in this week's *New Statesman* that the trend is quite opposite to what the sceptics want: there is even, amazingly, a swing towards a federal Europe – with 34 per cent in support compared with 17 per cent three years ago.

Most discussion of Hague's difficulties has concentrated on the split. But this may not be the primary problem, any more than unity is the solution. It may be that by pursuing the wrong policy the party risks disconnecting itself from the electorate. The closest potential parallel in Tory history is surely tariff reform. For much of the first quarter of the century the leadership promoted a policy that was almost universally popular inside the party, and utterly rejected by the electorate. Indeed, after the 1906 election the tariff reformers captured the party as the sceptics have captured today's Tory party. Yet when in 1923 Baldwin offered an unconditional promise of tariff reform, he lost the election. As the historian Robert Blake has written of the early century Tories: "Tariff reform remained an article of faith in the party ... in spite of its obvious unpopularity with the public ... Seldom has a party persisted so long in such an unpromising cause." Sound familiar?



Gimme 5? In-depth Kirsty Wark on 'Newsnight' (left) and the more informal, and increasingly popular, Kirsty Young on Channel 5

Kirsty or Kirsty, you can choose



SUZANNE
MOORE
THE NEW
DEFINITION
OF NEWS

Do you really want to know what is going on in the world? Can you really be bothered? Isn't there too much news already? The proposed revamping of Channel 4 news brought on, or so it has been said, by the success of Channel 5 news, once again begs the question of what makes good news. There is a move right across the media towards making the news more fun, more sexy, more entertaining, as though there is an implicit understanding that news on its own is just too straight, too dull and too boring to attract those peculiar minorities, women and young people.

If the news agenda is being shifted towards this new market then the news itself will have to change. Sure things will still happen, but there is a re-ordering of priorities about what is important. This newspaper is part of that change. Yet such changes do not come easily to news organisations in which the traditional ways of dividing up the news are firmly in place.

Those currently complaining about British children watching cartoons like *The Simpsons* and

feature- and commentary-led on the basis that most people get their news from radio and television. The idea is that people have already received the primary information about what is going on, and, instead of needing more repetition of facts, they instead need a way of understanding of processing all this information.

Increasingly, however, there are worries about the presentation. Channel 4's in-depth coverage, centred on sexy but serious Jon Snow, is to be tattered up. Channel 5 news, with its more informal approach pioneered by Kirsty Young, is seen as a direct challenge to the old way of doing things – big brains behind big desks combined with reports that have been prepared earlier.

Kirsty perches on desks in her natty trouser suits and chats her way through the stories of the day. Fans say it's fresh critics say that it's lightweight with far too many consumer stories. Anyway, aren't we in danger of replicating the American obsession with anchor men/women when what becomes important is the person reading the news rather than the news itself? Cosy Trevor Macdonald versus edgy Jeremy Paxman. Deeply concerned Michael Buerk versus trendy hiker Jon Snow. Shallow Kirsty Young versus in-depth Wark. You choose your news according to your view of who gives it to you. This is a superficial way of looking at it: style becomes more important than content and therefore content inevitably suffers. This is the ongoing Americanisation or globalisation of all media that produces cheap and tacky entertainment. This is the supposed dumbing down that gets everyone so excited.

If the news agenda is being shifted towards this new market then the news itself will have to change. Sure things will still happen, but there is a re-ordering of priorities about what is important. This newspaper is part of that change. Yet such changes do not come easily to news organisations in which the traditional ways of dividing up the news are firmly in place.

Print journalism has become far more "magaziney", more

entertainment, and are bought on that basis, but it was their investigations of the Royal Family that in their own way brought the monarchy into crisis. The investigative teams of the broadsheets did not do this, or even try.

The success of Channel 5 news also points to a more localised news media. This, in fact, is the situation in America, where much news is multi-local rather than national – let alone international. Consumer stories, human interest stories, quirky stories, do attract audiences. The big stories lately, whether Diana or Louise Woodward, are undoubtedly human interest stories and no less important for that.

The old confidence about what is significant in the world, which many would describe as arrogance, has ebbed away. The paternalistic attitude that was once sure that the news would be good for us, educate us, even if we had to struggle through it, has gone. Some would argue that the biggest losers in all of this have been the foreign and investigative reporters whose work is considered far too expensive. Who cares about what's going on in Algeria when you can have another Spice Girls story? These heroes of the news industry remain sacrosanct. They are intrepid and therefore must never be criticised. Why not? Perhaps all news has to be presented differently.

It's far too lazy simply to blame the tabloids for all these changes. Tabloids may sell themselves primarily as enter-

Digest the news



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All you need to know about everything that matters

Trade and aid can mix, and it's not all beards and sandals

PAUL
VALLEY
ETHICAL
TRADING

I have an interest to declare here but let me come to that in a moment. To most people one of the most unexpected aspects of this week's White Paper on overseas development is its emphasis on "ethical trading". Time was when ethical trading meant African handicrafts on sale at the back of the church hall or undrinkable coffee at Nicaraguan Solidarity stalls (whatever happened to them?). So how has it gone from a hobby for the beard-and-sandals brigade to being a big

plank in government policy in less than a decade?

The very idea of ethical trading would not long ago have been regarded in Labour Party circles as an oxymoron. I might have thought so, too, until I went to Ethiopia during the 1984 famine. That brought home to me the limitations of the approach to aid that was then current. Emergency food did the job of keeping people alive. But so many of the development projects that were supposed to prevent future emergencies were based on a paradigm which ended with grandiose modernisation projects, abandoned and overgrown in the African bush.

Over the next decade I reported from 30 Third World countries and was increasingly struck by the extent to which all suffered from the same problems. Two things became clear. First, that if development projects were to work they had to be rooted in the priorities and perceptions of the local people, not those of experts from abroad. Second, that all projects would be fruitless unless some of the underlying structural problems were dealt with in the

international trading system: the West had erected an edifice of tariff and taxes to discourage Third World countries from developing their own industry and instead continuing simply to provide the industrialised world with raw materials. The system that went under the name of free trade was for many not free at all, and certainly not fair.

And now for my declaration of interest. When my decade of overseas travelling came to an end I became involved with Traidcraft, a plc which buys and sells Third World products but which pays a fair price to the people who make them. Its sister company, Traidcraft Exchange, of which I now chair the board, runs a business advisory service to provide basic business skills to those producers and gives marketing information on what will sell in the UK.

It was not terribly fashionable when I joined. The pure of heart preferred charitable giving untainted by the murky marketplace. The politically minded saw it as a kind of Trojan horse for Thatcherism. "You're just a social market man." I was once told by

Labour's last development minister, Judith Hart.

But business was vital – and not just because self-sufficiency and work lies at the core of human dignity. As Clare Short's white paper acknowledges, private capital flows have now come to dwarf official flows as a source of money into the Third World. More than that, the man and woman in the high street had ceased to be citizens and become consumers. The challenge was to harness that and ensure that every £1 spent was an economic vote cast in the direction of the poor.

That meant a wider canvas than Traidcraft's mail order system and its 2,000 voluntary reps could afford. Abroad Traidcraft Exchange spawned indigenous partner organisations in South Africa, Tanzania, the Philippines, India, Zambia and Bangladesh. At home it established a partnership with three other "alternative trading" groups – Oxfam Trading, Equal Exchange, Twin Trading – to create a new, fairly traded, high-quality coffee named *Cafédirect* and persuade supermarkets that there is a market for ethics, just as there was

for environmentally friendly goods.

It has been a marked success. Other fairly traded goods – including tea and chocolate – are now widely available in supermarkets branded with the mark of the Fairtrade Foundation which Traidcraft set up in coalition with Cafod, Christian Aid, New Consumer, Oxfam, the World Development and, perhaps most surprisingly, the Women's Institute.

But introducing new brands cannot be a comprehensive answer. Existing companies had to be influenced towards more ethical business practices. Aid agencies began pressuring large manufacturers and retailers to endorse codes of conduct. Christian Aid rated supermarkets in order of Third World friendliness (Tesco came top) and ran exposés of the sweatshop labour behind Nike shoes and child labourers who make Premier League footballs. Cafod did the same with fashion footwear from Brazil.

Social auditing is, of course, like codes of conduct, a voluntary mechanism. But it is proving such an effective tool of management information that many companies are considering it who do not feel the need to adopt it as a mere PR measure. The challenge now is to spread that further. Globalisation has brought new problems for developing countries. But it has also brought a new lever with which to press for a better deal for the world's poor.

Bank shocks City with surprise interest rate rise

The increase in interest rates announced by the Bank of England yesterday took the financial markets by surprise. And, as Diane Coyle, Economics Editor, discovered, City experts could not agree on how much further the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee would go.

The quarter-point rise in interest rates to 7.25 per cent sent the pound up and the money markets sharply lower yesterday. Many traders had persuaded themselves that the recent stockmarket turbulence would delay the next rate move, and they were therefore caught on the hop by the Monetary Policy Committee's decision.

In the aftermath of the midday announcement the pound jumped by a pence to just under DM2.91, while its index climbed by 0.9 to 103.3. The sterling futures market fell sharply, betting on rates being another half point higher by next June.

Many City economists expressed either surprise or disappointment at yesterday's move. "I'm surprised the Bank has chosen to ignore the strength of the pound and the turbulence in financial markets," said Simon Briscoe at Nikko Europe.

The publication of the Bank's Quarterly Inflation Report next week was seen as the likeliest explanation for the timing. Following yesterday's move the report will be able to show inflation meeting its target rather than overshooting it.

However, the experts were sharply divided on how much higher rates will need to be raised to meet the 2.5 per cent target.

Roger Bootle, chief economist at HSBC Markets, predicted at most one more quarter point step in the first quarter of next year. "The markets have overreacted," he added.

On the other hand, Steven Bell, head of research at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, said: "The MPC must have it in mind to do more. The labour market indicators are all flashing red." He said rates could climb to 8 per cent next year.

The Bank's statement indicated that skill shortages in the jobs market and unsustainable growth in GDP had tipped the balance. It admitted growth would slow next year but said the balance of risks was such that the Committee had judged a modest rate rise necessary.

Behind the uncertainty about future rate rises lie diverging assessments of the current strength of the economy. Two leading forecasting groups joined business organisations yesterday in saying that the Bank's move was unnecessary.

In its latest report the London Business School's Centre for Economic Forecasting said the economy is heading for a "soft landing". But Andrew Sentance, its director, said that although the risk of recession was still "remote", the Bank had made a slowdown in 1998 more likely.

"The Bank of England has chosen to take out an insurance policy against potential inflation risks in the pipeline," he said.

The new forecast foresees inflation hitting a peak of 3 per cent in 1999, well within the Government's 1.5 per cent to 3.5 per cent target range, without any further rate rises.

Separately, Garry Young of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research agreed that policy was already tight enough for the inflation target to be met. The rise "increases the chance of a recession next year," he warned.

This warning was echoed by some business groups. Ian Peters, deputy director general of the British Chambers of Commerce, said: "In our view recent surveys do not provide sufficient evidence for a further rise at this time."

"With UK interest rates the highest of G7 countries, this will further constrain Britain's international competitiveness," he added.

However, mortgage lenders reacted calmly, with most announcing that they would not make any decisions about mortgage rates immediately. The two biggest mutual lenders, the Nationwide and Bradford & Bingley, made a widespread move unlikely by saying they would hold their rates until the end of December and end of January respectively.



Eddie George: Following yesterday's move the Governor will be able to show inflation meeting its target in the Bank's Quarterly Inflation Report next week

Nor did the lenders think the latest rate rise would harm the housing market. "As long as base rates do not go a lot higher, there will be no impact. The housing market recovery is solidly based," said Gary Marsh of the Halifax.

Some economists reckon the pace of growth is still so rapid that the Bank will eventually have to stamp harder on the brakes. Most pointed to the mounting evidence of skill shortages and pay pressures in the jobs market as the biggest concern.

David Walton at Goldman Sachs said one

more increase would get the economy back to its trend. "But that is the minimum that is needed to keep inflation on target," he said. The risk was that rates would need to be raised even further.

And Kevin Gardiner of Morgan Stanley said: "The Bank has given its credibility a real boost."

But with even the most pessimistic analysts foresee interest rates rising no higher than 8 per cent, this would be the lowest peak during a business cycle for a generation.

Outlook, page 23

High street fared better in October but car sales suffered slowdown

Retail sales picked up in October, according to figures released yesterday which helped vindicate the Bank's decision to lift rates. But the booming car market slowed down after its strong performance over the summer. Michael Harrison and Diane Coyle examine the latest figures.

The Confederation of British Industry reported that sales volumes reached their strongest level for a year in October after having been held back the previous month by the "Diana factor".

According to the organisation's latest distributive trades survey the level of activity on the high street last month was well above average for the time of year with sales increasing at their quickest rate since November, 1996.

The CBI said the underlying trend suggested that a slowdown in sales growth since midsummer has levelled off. Retailers also became more optimistic about sales prospects for the next few months with the volume of business in October surpassing their expectations.

Alastair Eperon, chairman of the CBI's survey panel, said: "This survey paints a more promising picture for retailers, as overall sales volumes in October increased at their fastest rate for almost a year."

The balance of retailers reporting an increase rather than a decrease in sales was 38 per cent compared with 26 per cent in September.

All retail sectors apart from footwear and leather reported October sales higher than a year earlier. Sales of both furniture and carpets and clothing rebounded strongly after a dismal September. Off-licences, bookshops and chemists also had a much better month.

"Overall the survey indicates a bounce back in spending in October, but not at a rate that will allow retailers to push up prices," concluded Geoffrey Dicks, an economist at NatWest Markets.

Michael Saunders of Salomon Brothers said the evidence that consumer spending had not yet slowed to a sus-

tainable pace supported the case for a base rates rise.

Simon Briscoe of Nikko Europe said that despite the modest nature of the pick-up the markets were likely to remain nervous about future trends, particularly the threat of a spending boom over the Christmas period.

Christmas shopping lifts consumer spending in November and December and this year many analysts are predicting that High Street sales could be stronger than ever. They said that was particularly because of a boost from the windfall gains made by millions of people from the stockmarket flotation that followed the conversion of several leading building societies into banks earlier this year. Analysts also said that retail sales were being buoyed by increases in incomes.

New car sales figures for October were more muted showing a rise of only 1.3 per cent to 156,706 on the same month last year. The increase compares with record sales in August and September and an overall rise of 6.7 per cent in the new car market in the first 10 months of the year.

"These figures are clear evidence of a slowdown in the car market following the pattern of other retail sectors," said Ernie Thompson, chief executive of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders.

Alan Pulham, director of the Retail Motor Industry Federations, dealers association, said: "It is clear that demand is slowing in line with the general economy but the figures are still a cause for gratification."

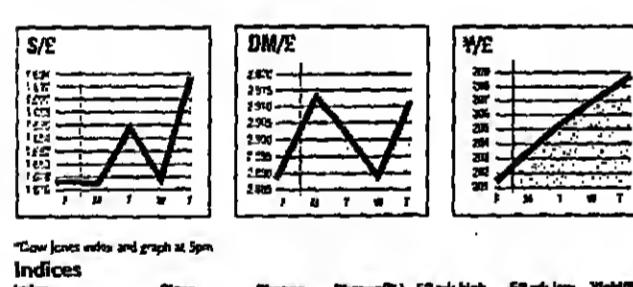
Imports took 68 per cent of the market while the share of sales accounted for by private motorists as opposed to fleet buyers was 44 per cent.

Ford remained the market leader although its share slipped to 16.7 per cent with Vauxhall taking 14.7 per cent of sales and Rover just under 10 per cent.

The CBI's survey followed a report earlier in the week showing an increase in business activity in all the service industries. The Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply said

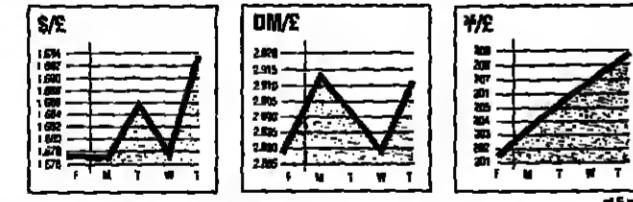
there were signs of skill shortages and rising pay.

STOCK MARKETS



Index	Class	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	YTD (%)
FTSE 100		-44.50	-0.91	5367.00	3882.70	3.59
FTSE 250		-6.40	-0.14	4963.80	4321.80	3.45
FTSE 350		-18.00	-0.76	2570.50	1935.70	3.56
FTSE All Share		-18.55	-0.71	2507.68	1925.79	3.53
FTSE SmallCap		-2.40	-0.10	2407.40	2127.50	3.21
FTSE MidCap		1.10	0.09	1346.50	1198.70	3.34
FTSE AIM		0.70	0.07	1138.00	965.90	1.01
Dow Jones		-38.31	-0.50	8259.00	6041.68	1.75
Nikkei		85.82	0.52	21460.57	16020.32	0.93
Hong Kong		-269.19	-2.52	16820.31	8775.88	4.00
Dax		-42.77	-1.11	4456.69	2674.78	2.09

INTEREST RATES



Index	3 month	1 yr cd	7 yr	10 yr	1 yr gil	Long term	1 yr swap	
UK	7.44	1.13	7.63	0.88	6.84	-1.17	6.52	-1.44
US	5.78	0.28	5.97	0.25	5.93	-0.36	6.24	-0.37
Japan	0.52	0.02	0.56	-0.06	1.81	-0.79	2.38	-0.92
Germany	3.71	0.52	4.11	0.78	5.64	-0.27	5.25	-0.50

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises	Price (d)	Chg (d)	% Chg	Falls	Price (d)	Chg (d)	% Chg
Calt Telecom	561.50	24.50	4.56	RJL Mining	165.00	-15.00	-8.33
British	183.00	7.50	4.27	Dunkin Bus Sys	544.00	-32.00	-5.56
Pilkington	136.50	5.50	4.20	Burnah Castro	104.20	-53.00	-5.11
Orange	233.00	5.00	4.17	BOC Group	1009.50	-51	-4.54

CURRENCIES

S/E	Dollar	Yen	DM	Chg	7 yr	10 yr	Long term	1 yr swap
1.6937	+1.57%	1.6467	1.5904	-0.55%	1.6056			
2.9117	+1.86%	2.4944	2.1797	-0.39%	1.5130			
108.76	+12.57	104.85	123.20	+10.38	112.13			
102.40	-0.58	91.10	104.70	+0.20	96.20			

OTHER INDICATORS

Crude	Oil	Chg	7 yr	10 yr	Index	Chg	7 yr	10 yr	Long term
Brent Oil (\$)	18.68	0.17	21.25	GDP	114.00	3.90	109.7	Jan	
Gold (\$)	312.35	-1.20	379.15	RPI	159.30	3.6	153.76	Nov	
Silver (\$)	4.85	0.00	4.74	Base Rates	7.25	6.00			

source: Bloomberg

Doubts on Vickers Ernst partner quits after Revenue inquiry bid as Mayflower woos institutions

Mayflower, the automotive engineering group contemplating a £1bn break-up bid for Vickers, the tanks to Rolls Royce cars group, yesterday began wooing support from City institutions. But, as Michael Harrison and Chris Godsmark report, doubts are growing about Mayflower's ability to finance an offer on its own.

John Simpson, chief executive of Mayflower, who put the break-up value of Vickers at £920m, also questions whether the Rolls car division was what Mayflower is primarily interested in suggesting its



OUTLOOK ON INTEREST RATES, PERFORMANCE OF MAM'S PORTFOLIOS AND KODAK'S PLANS FOR RESTRUCTURING

Bank's stitch in time should save nine

On the stitch in time saves nine principle, the Bank of England was absolutely right to put up short-term interest rates by a quarter point yesterday to 7.25 per cent. A number of small increases in interest rates now should dampen the economy and head off the need for larger ones later.

All these decisions are in the end largely a matter of judgement and no doubt there were some on the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee who opposed this move. We'll have to wait six weeks to publication of the minutes to find out just how much opposition there was and where it came from.

Even so the case for raising rates now, though not overwhelming, is certainly compelling. The economy continues to grow at a fair old lick, and while inflation seems to be in abeyance right now, it won't be long at this rate before it resurfaces. In some areas of the economy, notably house prices in the South-east and wages in high skill jobs like IT, it is already racing away.

What is more, the strong pound and some deflation in producer prices may be helping to disguise a far more alarming inflationary picture in the economy than the one we are seeing. Those who believe otherwise, including the former chancellor Kenneth Clarke and the British Chambers of Commerce, are just kidding themselves.

Indeed, the only real surprise about yesterday's decision is that it appears to have been so unexpected in the City. Plainly this column, which has been warning of the need for another rise in interest rates, is not as widely read as it should be. True, we don't know yet in any detail what mech-

anisms and guidelines the MPC uses in coming to its interest rate decisions, so there is bound to be some confusion. There should be some illumination on that front in next Wednesday's inflation report.

But we do know what the inflation target is and you only have to look at the last inflation figures to know we are above it, albeit within the one percentage point band either way the Government has given the Bank as leeway. Furthermore, those who believed that the recent fall in the stock market might persuade the MPC to alter its judgement because of the risks of causing another precipitous sell-off can't have been reading the literature.

The MPC only has discretion to stray from the inflation target if there is a serious shock to the economy. Scary though the events of the past two weeks have been, a 9 per cent fall in a market which had already gone up nearly 30 per cent on the year, can hardly be described as that.

Nor should recent statements by either the Chancellor or the Governor about the need to maintain a parallel track and monetary policy with single currency countries, have been read as an indication that short term interest rates would be moved rapidly into line with these countries. Rather the reverse. What the Governor and the Chancellor were talking about was

the common European objective and purpose of low inflation growth. Because we are at a different stage of the business cycle, that objective for the time being requires a quite different monetary policy.

In other words, yesterday's decision,

unpalatable though it might have been, was also entirely predictable. A quarter point doesn't in any case make a huge amount of difference either way. But it does send out an important signal - that the Bank is serious about keeping the lid on inflation.

Mam needs to keep its nerve

When Carol Galley, chief executive of Mercury Asset Management, walks in to quiz a nervous chief executive about his company's performance, she wants explanations not excuses. Shareholders in MAM who have sought guidance on the underperformance of some of the fund manager's portfolios ought to be in the same privileged position, but they have been less fortunate.

To a point, MAM is right to ignore all the noise. No one with any sense gives a fig about poor performance in a fund over three months or even a year. What matters is the long haul, and if you go back five or 10 years, MAM is still right up there with the best of them. It would also be wrong to extrapolate from the performance of one £3bn UK-focused fund the likely track record of a global investment company with more than £100bn of funds tied up in all asset classes in many different countries.

That said, shareholders might expect a clearer explanation of what went wrong and why in MAM's UK pooled pension fund. MAM has grown fat on the billions that pension funds have pushed its way as

a direct consequence of its outperformance of the market and its peers. It can't expect mandates to keep arriving if it remains at the bottom of the class.

For the time being, new business continues to flood into the group but that is in part a reflection of the conservatism of trustees - no one got fired for appointing MAM - and the inevitable time-lag between a fund manager losing its touch and losing its clients. The worst thing it could do now, however, would be to also lose its nerve.

Having miscalculated the surge in financial stocks and counted on a recovery in a handful of bombed-out stocks that failed to materialise, it has responded by reining in individual managers' powers and moving towards stock selection by committee.

At a time when active fund managers face an increasing threat from computers that simply track the indices, the highest risk strategy would paradoxically be to take fewer risks. MAM should stick to its stock picking and turn a deaf ear to the *Schadenfreude*.

A bleak picture at Kodak

Next Tuesday the chief executive of Kodak, George Fisher, will present Wall Street with a snapshot of where the company is and a time-delayed frame of where he plans to take it. For the group's 94,000 workers, the picture looks bleak. The word is that he will take the axe to the business

so violently that when he is finished, Kodak will have become, if not a virtual corporation, then certainly a pale image of its former self.

As many as 14,000 job cuts are being spoken of along with a savage streamlining of production operations, the relocation of manufacturing facilities to low-cost countries and an exit from the business of making photographic paper, one of the main planks on which the Kodak brand has been built. This is as massive a corporate restructuring as they come.

It is clear something needs to be done. The company being overtaken and flattened by the Japanese, notwithstanding the company's famous brand name. Its share price has fallen by a third this year alone, its costs are 25 per cent higher than rivals such as Fuji, and its investment in the technology of tomorrow, the digital camera, has so far proved an expensive failure.

But for all that Kodak's solution sits oddly with the mood in the rest of corporate America, where there has been a fierce backlash against slash and burn labour policies and the ferocious downsizing that became the hallmark of the early 1990s. Job reduction and compression aside, the main thrust of the company's revival strategy looks like being big price cuts in its core retail film business, which might allow it to match the competition from Japan but threatens to leave a \$500m hole in operating profits. It is not obvious that such tactics will succeed in reviving the company.

Kodak could axe 14,000 in 'draconian' restructuring

Kodak has one of the world's most powerful brands, but recently its focus has become fuzzy. Now Wall Street is hoping that next week George Fisher, the company's chief executive, will offer a solution by cutting thousands of jobs.

David Usborne in New York reports.

With its stock struggling and its revenue under attack from competitors such as Fuji of Japan, Kodak is expected to announce dramatic steps next week to regain momentum - including plans to slash up to 14,000 jobs from a bloated payroll.

Anticipation is rising on Wall Street that an analysts meeting that has been called by Mr Fisher, for next Tuesday will mark the moment the company bites a series of painful bullets.

In addition to pruning workforce numbers, Kodak could announce several other initiatives including a broad price-cutting campaign for its core retail film business, and a streamlining of manufacturing operations.

In a brief statement yesterday, the photographic and imaging giant said only: "We will take strong action to reduce our cost structure and strong action to accelerate our growth strategy."

Formula One float back on track

Bernie Ecclestone's hopes of floating Formula One Holdings, his motor racing promotional empire, have been boosted by a breakthrough in the row over television rights with leading Grand Prix teams. Chris Godsmark, Business Correspondent, examines the remaining obstacles on the road to a £1.5bn share bonanza.

Sources close to the top teams said Mr Ecclestone, who has more control over the sport than anyone else, had almost



Kodak may announce a broad price-cutting campaign for its core retail film business

of Fisher, has so failed properly to take off and is so far losing the firm roughly \$200m a year.

Investors above all expect Fisher to cut costs wherever he can. Costs are running at about 27 per cent of sales at Kodak. That compares hopelessly unfavourably with a 20 per cent figure at Fuji.

Mr Fisher is not expected to give final details on price-reduction tactics at next week's meeting, that will have to be entered into with retailers. If, however, Kodak attempts to lower prices by 10 per cent

on its consumer film products, it could cut into operating profits by as much as \$500m a year.

Action that Mr Fisher may announce, aside from job cuts, could be the relocation of disposable camera manufacturing from the current US plants to countries with lower costs like Mexico.

Some analysts also expect Kodak to stop making photographic paper. That would mean closing its pulp mill in New York state and contracting out paper-making to outside suppliers.

The Arrows team is also understood to have settled its dispute over Concorde. Arrows, which parted company with former world champion Damon Hill at the end of the season, was also thought to be attempting to contest the agreement, despite having previously signed.

The biggest obstacle to the float is now an investigation by the European Commission into whether Mr Ecclestone can claim ownership of television rights. The Commission is questioning whether contracts signed by broadcasters and teams breached competition rules.

It emerged yesterday that Tyrrell have recently signed up to Concorde, while the two much bigger teams, Williams and McLaren, are now "80 per cent" of the way to an agreement, af-

ter Mr Ecclestone offered significant concessions. Previously sources said they had been only half-way towards a deal with Mr Ecclestone, whose company was given control over the lucrative rights by the sport's governing body, FIA's adviser.

Another barrier to the float was also removed this week, when the Government said it would not force teams to ditch tobacco advertising. Top teams can net more than £20m from individual cigarette sponsors.

Details of the division of revenues have always been a closely guarded secret in motor racing. Mr Ecclestone last year pulled off a deal thought to be worth £70m with ITV, giving the

Boots plans to boost market share with 'health' strategy

First there was Boots the Chemist, then Boots Opticians, and soon there could be Boots the Dentist. In the battle for market share, Boots is planning to offer its customers more than just products - it wants to sell them expert advice on healthy living, writes Sameena Ahmad.

Boots, the chemist, car parts and DIY retailer, said yester-

day that it was planning to roll out dental services to customers in a programme designed to woo customers from the supermarkets. The company, which also reported interim profits up 6 per cent to £253m, said that it planned to roll out its current five concept chemist stores over the next three years.

The stores offer an expanded range of services such as counters advising customers on skin care, oral hygiene and hair colouring. Steve Russell, joint managing director, who calls the programme "positive

employing one registered dentist, though not practising, to advise customers in a pilot store in Bexley Heath.

A spokesman for the General Dental Council, which registers dentists, said he would be concerned if Boots was trying to offer advice that should come from qualified dentists.

"There is a grey area here. Legally only certain companies can employ dentists to practice dentistry and that includes advice. We would be concerned to clarify the situation with Boots."

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24/BUSINESS

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY SAMEENA AHMAD

Boots a safe bet in the turmoil

In these days of bouncing stock markets, Boots, the retail giant, looks an ever safe bet. Yesterday's healthy half-year results, which reported underlying profits 6 per cent ahead to £253m and sales 13 per cent stronger at £2.3bn, show Boots is acting fast to expand and differentiate its already strong Boots the Chemist (BTC) brand and keep competition from supermarket at bay.

Boots' advantage over the likes of Tesco is that its focus on healthcare and beauty is a perfect forum for brand building. Tins of beans come in limited varieties. Shampoos, bathfoam and lipsticks offer much more scope for the creative marketing manager. Boots' own brands, such as No. 7 skincare, are selling well.

With its own manufacturing, Boots can develop innovative product lines fast. Happily BTC is also in one of the fastest growing retail markets - health and beauty products. Demand here drove up BTC sales 4.8 per cent like-for-like and profits by 10 per cent, despite poor summer weather and the Diana effect which cost £9m in lost sales.

Anyone can sell a vitamin or a toothpaste and Boots with its grounding in pharmacy is exploring ways to offer consultation on top. Concept stores offering customers advice on tooth and skin care should be rolled out over the next three years. It sounds like a great way to keep people in the shops and buying for longer.

Lord Blyth, chief executive, spies plenty of gaps in which to plug a BTC shop. The high street stores, currently 1300 in number could be expanded by 40 new shops a year with 21 larger edge-of-town stores expected by the year-end. Though early days, the Advantage Card, launched September 1st at a cost of £9m, looks like it will be a winner with applications already exceeding 4 million, making the £8 million card, 12 month target look beatable. Of the other retail businesses Do-It-All is recovering and in profit of this stronger first half, paving the way for an eventual sell-off and profits at Halfords, the car parts retailer, surged 40 per cent.

With risk-averse investors piling into defensive stocks, the group's rating of

Boots: At a glance					
	1995	1996	1997	1996	1997
Turnover (£bn)	4.31	4.12	4.58	2.13	2.37
Pre-tax profits (£m)	850	508	571	256	105
Earnings per share (p)	65.7	35.8	42.9	18.1	2.6
Dividends per share (p)	17.0	18.5	64.7*	6.2	6.7



20 times on £560m profits for the full year now looks full. Hold for now.

Kwik Save slow to arrest decline

Whoever takes over from Graham Bowler next summer faces an enormous task. Kwik Save, squeezed between the supermarket majors on the one hand and the continental discounters on the other, is struggling hard to justify its existence.

Pre-tax profits of £73.7m for the year to August were well down on the £90.3m achieved last year and look likely to continue to fall, with shoppers deserting the chain in droves. Like-for-like sales during the year fell 4 per cent while the industry as a whole reported a 5 per cent rise. In the eight weeks since the end of the financial year there has been a further 6 per cent decline.

Kwik Save has spent a fortune on advice from Anderson Consulting, which seems to have concluded that Kwik Save's shops should be more like the Tesco and Asda ones its customers

are flocking to. It is hard to see how that strategy can work, however, when the only reason for Kwik Save being there at all is that it offers something the others do not.

The company's main challenge is deceptively simple - to persuade its existing customer base to spend more. The New Generation stores, currently being rolled out, though at rather a snail's pace, now focus more on fresh produce, but most shoppers seem likely to continue to use Kwik Save only for cheap commodities.

Key to this year's results will be how successful Kwik Save proves to be in using a roll-out of its own brand labels to increase its gross margin. With sales, even after a forecast 4 per cent decline this year, expected to be around £3bn, profits are highly sensitive to small movements in the return on turnover. Squeezing another 0.8 per cent of gross margin after last year's 1.1 per cent rise could result in pre-tax profits this time of £66m, analysts believe, but growth of half as much would peg profits back to £54m.

At 325.5p, up 2p yesterday, Kwik Save's shares stand on a prospective price/earnings ratio of 13 or 15, depending on which view you take off

margins. Despite a net yield of over 6 per cent, the shares, at less than half the level they reached only two years ago, remain unattractive.

Yates Bros makes rapid progress

Yates Brothers Wine Lodges grew out of a 19th-century wine shipper based in Manchester but joined the stock market only three years ago and embarked on a period of rapid expansion. Under the direction of Peter Dickson, a great grandson of the founder, Yates will increase its trading outlets by an astonishing 40 per cent in the current financial year, and plans to double again over the next four years to 200 sites in all the big towns in the country.

New locations can cost up to £2m to acquire and equip, but they take an average of £20,000 a week, putting them at the very top end of the licensed premises business and move quickly into profit.

Rapid growth costs money, however. Capital expenditure doubled to almost £20m in the first half and borrowings rose to £29m. Yates yesterday hired John Barnes the managing director of the Harry Ramsden fish-and-chip chain as a non-executive director for his expertise with retail brands and tapped another source of capital when it teamed up with Quintain Estates, a South of England property company, to create an investment company specialising in licensed premises and restaurants.

Initially the joint venture will invest £20m in a portfolio of 15 of Yates' premises that will be leased back on 25-year terms, and Yates will raise a net £16m on the deal to fund further expansion.

Profits have risen steadily over the last five years including a 27 per cent increase to £5.1m before exceptional items in the six months to 28 September. But Williams de Broc is still forecasting profits of £12m and earnings of 15.3p for the full year. The shares, unchanged at 378.5p, are at 25 times prospective earnings. High enough for a family-controlled company which might need a rights issue next year.

A company spokesman said:

"We normally expect there to be a steady flow of reasonably large claims, such as fires and floods. But this year we have had an extraordinarily good first six months. Like the Lon-

Shell considers big drive into Russia

of the group's £7bn cash pile.

One analyst, John Toolster from Société Générale, said:

"There is a lot of hope value and nothing is materialising."

Shell has previously said a buy-back was unlikely in the short term because of unfavourable tax treatment in the Netherlands.

Shell has raised expectations with recent deals including buying out its Italian joint venture partner, Montedison, in the Montell plastics making business.

The results were boosted by continuing cost cutting in Shell's exploration and production business, which partly offset the recent drop in oil prices. Third-quarter earnings from exploration and production fell 1 per cent, to £595m. Shell yesterday said it was pleased by the improving political climate for foreign investors.

Shares in Shell Transport,

the UK quoted part of the group, fell 8p yesterday to 412.5p, after the company revealed a modest 5 per cent rise in earnings in the third quarter, excluding special items, to £1.17bn. Shell said the results was its second record third-quarter performance in a row, but analysts pointed to continuing uncertainty over the future.

Royal SunAlliance profits slip

Royal SunAlliance yesterday blamed what it called "the London bus syndrome" for a leap in claims in the third quarter of this year which caused its profits to slip.

The composite insurer said it had been hit by an unusually high number of claims, which cost £93m, 79 per cent more than in the third quarter of 1996. This helped to push down profits over the nine months by £3.78m.

A company spokesman said:

"We normally expect there to be a steady flow of reasonably large claims, such as fires and floods. But this year we have had an extraordinarily good first six months. Like the Lon-

don bus all coming at once, we had all the claims between July and September."

Royal SunAlliance said the

volcano eruption in Monterrey and large claims on UK property had boosted the claims figure. The company said it had also been hit by the strong pound because half of its general insurance and a third of its life insurance was sold abroad.

Investors drove down Royal SunAlliance shares by 19.5p to 580.5p. The drop of 2.5 per cent compared with a 1 per cent slide in the FTSE 100 index.

Some analysts said they were disappointed the insurer had as yet failed to deliver on a promised share buy-back. It

- Andrew Verity

Daiwa executives arrested in Tokyo

widespread than originally thought.

Sokaiya are extortions who extract money from companies in return for not disrupting shareholders' meetings. Payments to sokaiya have been illegal in Japan since 1983.

The Japanese media have alleged that several top Japanese firms have channeled money to sokaiya extortions via payments for beach houses rented from a sokaiya-associated firm, Hitachi, the electronics group, last week admitted that it had made payments of this type.

The scandal has begun to impact upon the financial health of leading Japanese companies. Moody's Investor Service, the credit rating agency, warned yesterday that Yamaichi Securities bond ratings could be downgraded. Moody's is conducting a review of Yamaichi.

"This is threatening to destroy the international credibility of the entire Japanese economy," said Kaneo Murooka, chief cabinet secretary, in an address to Japanese business leaders yesterday.

Until recently, the scandal was thought to be confined to the financial community. But recent revelations that Mitsubishi, the car maker, and Toshiba, the giant electronics company, had made payments to alleged racketeers showed that the influence of the sokaiya was more

- Leo Paterson

Barclays Base Rate Change

Barclays Bank PLC

announces that with effect from

6th November 1997,

its Base Rate has increased

from 7.00% to 7.25%

BARCLAYS

REGISTERED OFFICE: 34 LOMBARD STREET, EC3P 3AH.
REGISTERED NUMBER 1026167.

Etam continues talks with bidders

Etam, the troubled women's wear retailer, said yesterday it was continuing to hold talks with potential bidders for the company, but declined to divulge the identity of any of the suitors.

"These proposals are being actively considered and a further announcement will be communicated to shareholders as soon as possible," Nick Hollingsworth, Etam's managing director, said yesterday. News that the company was in bid talks was first announced last month.

The most likely bidders, according to market sources, include House of Fraser, New Look and a US footwear retailer, Nine West.

Meanwhile, the company yesterday reported a loss of £7.8m for the half-year to 9 August, one third larger than in the equivalent period last year. Turnover was down 6 per cent, rent and rates edged higher and staff costs went up nearly 5 per cent. Gearing and interest charges rose, although capital expenditure was cut from £4.5m to £2.8m and the number of shops was pruned from 221 to 214.

The shares fell a further 1.5p to 118p, a far cry from the peak of 280p three years ago.

- Clifford German

Owfat reveals extent of hosepipe ban

Some 32 per cent of households in England and Wales were subject to hosepipe bans last year, according to figures released yesterday by Owfat, the water watchdog. Owfat said the numbers of bans had fallen in the year to the end of March compared with the previous year. The report praised the industry for improving service standards, but warned the performance of some companies was not good enough. The report showed 92 per cent of enquiries about bills were answered within five working days, while the number of written complaints fell by 15,000 to 157,000. Poor performance was highlighted at Anglian Water, North West, South West and Wessex, which were asked to provide plans for improvement.

BSkyB deal confirmed

BSkyB and Cable & Wireless Communications yesterday confirmed they had signed a deal to co-operate on the launch of digital satellite and cable television. As part of the two to three-year agreement, which had been trailed for many months, CWC is to take BSkyB's pay-per-view service, Sky Box Office, on analogue and digital platforms. Customers will be able to pay to view movies, sporting and music events. The pact threatens to undermine an alliance between four other cable companies to develop a pay-per-view service.

German manufacturing

German manufacturing orders fell a seasonally adjusted 1.8 per cent in September from August and were up an unadjusted 10.9 per cent from a year earlier, the Economics Ministry said. The consensus forecast had been for a rise of 0.6 per cent. The ministry said it expects an upward correction in the September data. The fact holidays were later this year distorted the figures for September and August. Domestic orders in Germany were down 2.0 per cent in September from August and up 4.2 per cent from a year earlier, while foreign orders shed 1.3 per cent on the month, but rose 22.3 per cent on the year.

Boost for Northern Leisure

Shares in the fast-expanding Northern Leisure chain of licensed dance halls rose 11p to a peak of 325.5p yesterday after Nick Oppenheim, vice chairman, delivered an up-beat statement at the annual meeting. In the nine weeks since 1 September like-for-like sales have increased 3.8 per cent and total sales are 91.3 per cent ahead, thanks to new outlets. Three more sites have been acquired in the last two months at a cost of £7.5m, bringing the number of outlets to 44.

Capita wins Lambeth deal

Capita, the management consultants and information technology group, has won a contract worth £48m over seven years to supply services to the London Borough of Lambeth. Capita will develop Lambeth's office into a London Business Centre which hopes to attract additional business to the borough.

Care First buys SurgiChem

Care First Group, the nursing home provider, has acquired SurgiChem, a manufacturer of monitored dosage systems, for £1.3m plus a performance payment of up to £100,000. SurgiChem made a profit of about £220,000 in the year to end September.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Boots (I)*	2.4bn (2.1bn)	253m (239m)	19.3p (17.2p)	6.7p (6.2p)
City Breweries (F)	85.8m (45.1m)	1.13m (2.33m)	5.79p (19.54p)	8p (8p)
Estates & Agency (F)	- (-)	1.54m (1.05m)	17.9p (15.32p)	18.5p (15p)
E.ON (I)	89.1m (94.5m)	-0.55m (-0.78m)	-11.87p (-8.95p)	0.5p (0.5p)
Gryphon (F)	13.7m (17.8m)	5.6m (2.8m)	4.6p (3.19p)	n/- (-)
Kwik Save (F†)	3.2m (3.51m)	73.7m (2.8m)	2	

25/SHARES

THE INDEPENDENT
FRIDAY
7 NOVEMBER 1997

Norwich Union lifted by takeover talk once again

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN
STOCK
MARKET
REPORTER
OF THE YEAR

Norwich Union, the insurance group which has suffered near continuous blasts of takeover speculation since arriving on the stock market in the summer, again stole the limelight, gaining 8.5p to 359p.

In busy trading the shares were at one time riding at 361.5p with a stream of small deals going through.

The insurer has put on a remarkable display since flotation when shares were offered to members at 265p and institutions at 290p. Members also collected free shares.

Long before Norwich made its market debut there was a strong conviction its days of independence were numbered. Indeed, towards the end of the flotation count down there was often intense speculation of bids being prepared.

The latest share strength heralds another round of bid

talk. Barclays and Lloyds TSB remain the market's favourite predators.

The Barclays image, suffering from the BZW sale fiasco, would benefit from a positive move like an insurance strike and Lloyds has already made clear it still nurses insurance ambitions.

But the bid story does not get universal support. There is a school of thought that the share display is due to institutions taking advantage of selling by small shareholders.

At the time of the issue their allocations were cut back.

Norwich shrugged off a downbeat session which was threatening to be a non event even before the surprise interest rate increase. Footsie ended 44.5 points down at 4,863.8; at one time it was off 67.1. Supporting shares were off.

Pilkington was again the heaviest traded share with a 31.7 million volume recorded. The price recovered some of

RJB Mining had another distressing time, hit by a mystery 8 million share sale. An institution sold the shares at 150p, below the then market price, to another institution. The identity of the buyer and seller was not disclosed but many suspect Mercury Asset Management topped up its stake with Abbey Life unloading.

RJB has been hit by cheap coal imports and generators switching from coal to gas. It has warned of pit closures and 4,000 job losses. The Government has ruled out offering a helping hand.

Last month Dresden Kleinwort Benson said sell and warned the shares may be worth only 100p; they ended 15p off at 165p.

Pilkington was again the heaviest traded share with a 31.7 million volume recorded. The price recovered some of

Wednesday's fall, ending 5.5p higher at 136.5p.

Rank, up 3p to 346p, continued its buy back programme, picking up 1.8 million shares at 345p. Analysts toured some of its British leisure operations this week.

Colt Telecom remained in form following Wednesday's results. It added a further 24.5p to 561.5p, a 47p two-day ad-

vance. Faber Prest, a specialist distributor, motored 102.5p to 340p as a possible bidder emerged but shopfitter Havelock Europa crashed 108p to 142p following a warning profits were being hit by sterling's strength. Ushers of Trowbridge, the brewer, remained flat on Wednesday's profit warning, falling another 9p to 85p.

Vickers firms up to 249p while Mayflow, the possible buyer of its Rolls-Royce cars division, fell a further 5.5p to 184p. T Clarke, a little electrical installer, surged 17p to 98.5p after declaring a 17p a share special dividend. Current trading, it said, was encouraging. It has won contracts for power installations at Harrods in Knightsbridge and the fit out of the Marriott Hotel at Heathrow.

Aston Villa, despite its Euro success, ran into selling,

falling 70p to 762.5p. The shares were 1.070p when they arrived in the spring. The European victory lifted Manchester United just 1p to 654p.

Northern Leisure's upbeat trading statement pushed the shares 11p higher to 325.5p, a peak. Matthew Clark, the hard pressed cider and wine group, softened 3p to 241.5p after Merrill Lynch turned cautious.

Hophilic, interim figures next month, advanced 16p to a 251.5p peak. There is some talk of corporate action. The company provides credit for motorists involved in no-fault accidents.

Kay's Food, the contract caterer, held at 27.5p. Kevin Leech, chief of ML Laboratories, has lifted his interest to 6.6 per cent through his Millennium Ventures. Stuart Sim, ML's finance director, has around 1 per cent.

TAKING STOCK

Era, the struggling retailer, held at 3.25p as a consortium

led by entrepreneur Luke Johnson was revealed as a possible buyer of its Tecno camera chain. Mr Johnson's team includes Charles Dunstone of The Carphone Warehouse and electrical retailer Julian Richer.

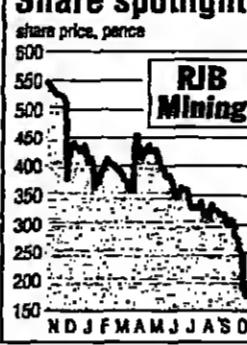
It is believed the group attempted to mount a reverse takeover before Era came under new management. There is speculation Mr Johnson and friends still see Era as a possible vehicle for a stock market presence.

Avocet Mining rose 8p to 150p as Société Générale

Stratus Turnbull forecast it could move from losses into profits of £10.5m in the year to March 1999. The company is a leading producer of tungsten, where demand is increasing, and has gold

operations in Malaysia.

Share spotlight



Microsoft's push to link cable TV up with the Net

Microsoft, Bill Gates' software giant, is hoping to take centre-stage as the Internet and television converge by linking up with leading US cable companies. Cathy Newman asks what Microsoft stands to gain, and what cable companies have to lose.

In recent weeks, Microsoft has reportedly been talking with all the big US cable companies - US West, Tele-Communications (TCI), Cox Communications, and Time Warner.

Microsoft's interest in television took off this year when it invested \$1bn (£600m) in an 11.5 per cent stake in Comcast, the fourth-largest cable television operator in the US, and bought Web TV Networks, a digital television set-top box maker, for \$425m.

Recent reports suggest Microsoft wants to make substantial investments in both US West and TCI. In addition, the company is believed to have held discussions with Cox and Time Warner about developing software for digital television.

Microsoft is intent on making itself indispensable when, next year, a new-generation set-top box - the device which unscrambles digital television signals - will give US customers simultaneous access to television and the Internet.

In return for sharing the financial burden of setting up new interactive services, Microsoft is hoping to gain control over the software used to enable viewers to access the Internet on TV screens. The move would

enable Microsoft to dominate the home entertainment market, just as it presently enjoys a virtual monopoly in the personal computer market.

Microsoft would be able to get its products into tens of millions of US homes subscribing to cable television, as potential profits from mainly office-based computer software tail off. Whereas, in the UK, cable penetration is struggling to take off, in the US, roughly 60 per cent of households with access to cable subscribe.

Mark Lambert, telecoms analyst at Merrill Lynch, says: "Over the last 12 months, Microsoft has recognised the growing potential of delivery into the home."

He adds that cable has become attractive to Microsoft as many of the new interactive services being developed use a lot of capacity. Cable has the right infrastructure for interactivity as it provides a far wider bandwidth than most ordinary telephone networks.

Microsoft is obviously keen to identify an opportunity before someone else does. "Someone else might be able to control the conduit as well as the content if Microsoft doesn't," says Mr Lambert.

Fred Moran, managing director of Furman Selz, a subsidiary of ING Barings, says: "We believe there will be further activity between Microsoft and the cable companies. Microsoft wants to expedite the development of the cable set-top box and ensure their software gets utilized in the process."

But Microsoft is not necessarily the only beneficiary of the alliances. Far from seeing Microsoft as a threatening mono-polist, Mr Moran reckons

<img alt="Screenshot of a Microsoft promotional website for the Internet Explorer 4.0 browser. The page features a large 'GO!' button and sections for 'New AOL', 'Windows 98', 'IE 4.0', 'IE 4.0 Preview', 'IE 4.0 Beta', 'IE 4.0 Beta 2', 'IE 4.0 Beta 3', 'IE 4.0 Beta 4', 'IE 4.0 Beta 5', 'IE 4.0 Beta 6', 'IE 4.0 Beta 7', 'IE 4.0 Beta 8', 'IE 4.0 Beta 9', 'IE 4.0 Beta 10', 'IE 4.0 Beta 11', 'IE 4.0 Beta 12', 'IE 4.0 Beta 13', 'IE 4.0 Beta 14', 'IE 4.0 Beta 15', 'IE 4.0 Beta 16', 'IE 4.0 Beta 17', 'IE 4.0 Beta 18', 'IE 4.0 Beta 19', 'IE 4.0 Beta 20', 'IE 4.0 Beta 21', 'IE 4.0 Beta 22', 'IE 4.0 Beta 23', 'IE 4.0 Beta 24', 'IE 4.0 Beta 25', 'IE 4.0 Beta 26', 'IE 4.0 Beta 27', 'IE 4.0 Beta 28', 'IE 4.0 Beta 29', 'IE 4.0 Beta 30', 'IE 4.0 Beta 31', 'IE 4.0 Beta 32', 'IE 4.0 Beta 33', 'IE 4.0 Beta 34', 'IE 4.0 Beta 35', 'IE 4.0 Beta 36', 'IE 4.0 Beta 37', 'IE 4.0 Beta 38', 'IE 4.0 Beta 39', 'IE 4.0 Beta 40', 'IE 4.0 Beta 41', 'IE 4.0 Beta 42', 'IE 4.0 Beta 43', 'IE 4.0 Beta 44', 'IE 4.0 Beta 45', 'IE 4.0 Beta 46', 'IE 4.0 Beta 47', 'IE 4.0 Beta 48', 'IE 4.0 Beta 49', 'IE 4.0 Beta 50', 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27/RACING

THE INDEPENDENT
FRIDAY
7 NOVEMBER 1997

Vets work to save Singspiel as fracture ends his career

The linchpin of Britain's challenge for the Breeders' Cup, Singspiel, has suffered a life-threatening injury just 48 hours before what would have been the final race of his record-breaking career. Richard Edmondson reports from Los Angeles.

A gallop in the fog ended Singspiel's participation in the Breeders' Cup here yesterday. Veterinarians are now working to ensure it does not also terminate his life.

The little horse, the biggest earner in the history of European racing, broke a cannon bone as he continued his preparation for tomorrow's Turf race. After 20 contests, spread over four seasons, a life-threatening injury struck just 48 hours before his final mission. "It would have been his last race and at least it's a lot better than happening today than on Saturday because he would have been going a lot faster then," Anthony Stroud, the racing manager to

Singspiel's owner, Sheikh Mohammed, said. "I hope he can be saved for stud."

The little form of Singspiel had beguiled all the American workwatchers since his arrival in Los Angeles. He had become the horse of the Breeders' Cup. Much of his work had been under clear, Californian skies, but yesterday the five-year-old emerged to conditions far more familiar to him and reminiscent of a Newmarket gallops morning. Visibility was down to 100 yards as a grey pall enveloped Hollywood Park.

Singspiel and his regular work rider, Kevin Bradshaw, were let on to the turf course just outside the track kitchen. The partnership entered into the cloud of mist and a walkie-talkie report relayed that the horse was galloping just past the wire on the opposite side of the track. Then there was nothing.

The wait became too protracted for comfort and Michael Stoute, Singspiel's trainer, scuttled off in search of his horse. When Stoute returned both he and Bradshaw were at the five-year-old's side. It was immediately obvious that the horse's Breeders' Cup

was over. "I could not see the work myself because of the fog," Stoute said, "but he breezed for four furlongs and, just about 20 yards before the line, Kevin felt something go."

Singspiel's condition appeared to deteriorate over every limping yard back to the high, green-fenced quarantine yard. He had a piteous look in his eye. The contest he had now been thrown into was the one to save his life and Steve Buttigebach, a track vet, was the first medical man to attend the horse. Around him there were tears in the Stoute camp.

An x-ray was taken to determine whether the damage was clean or a more serious spiral fracture. The results confirmed the former. "He sustained a mildly displaced condylar fracture of the right forelimb," Stroud said. "It is anticipated that his injury will require surgical stabilisation on probably Friday and Saturday, depending on his progress."

"The prognosis for such an injury is normally favourable, barring any complications, and the recovery period would be between two and four months." By then, Singspiel himself

was bandaged and standing in ice. The trauma he was feeling was stabilised by medication. Sheikh Mohammed was contacted in Dubai.

As the natural mist lifted, another descended with the realisation that not only was the meeting's figurehead out but Britain's challenge had been reduced to a rump. It was time to remember happier times, and Stroud and Stoute concurred on Singspiel's greatest moment. "The Dubai World Cup was his best race because he met seasoned American horses on a surface more familiar to them," the trainer said. "That was his crowning moment."

Stroud added: "That is why this horse is so special to Sheikh Mohammed, because he won the Dubai World Cup. That was definitely the pinnacle of his career. It's very disappointing but these things happen with horses. They are not machines."

"This horse has done us very, very proud. He's won in England, Ireland, Dubai, Japan and Canada. The main thing now is to try to save the horse. He's been versatile, tough and consistent. He's done us magnificently really."



Singspiel is accompanied by his trainer, Michael Stoute, as he steps out on the track at Hollywood Park prior to his injury yesterday

Photograph: Harry How

Call evokes old memories

Dorans Pride emerged victorious over Imperial Call at Clonmel yesterday, but a solid performance from the runner-up announced that he is again a Gold Cup contender.

Dorans Pride remains 6-1 favourite for the Cheltenham showpiece after his nine-length victory in the three-runner Morris Oil Chase, but Imperial Call, the 1996 Gold Cup winner, was cut to 12-1 by William Hill (from 16-1) after a promising effort on his first outing since being pulled up in this year's Gold Cup.

• The BHB claimed yesterday that racing will lose £5m of funding because of the decision by the big three bookmakers to change the way they make levy payments. Ladbrokes, William Hill and Coral are to revert to a shop-based scheme for calculating levy payments rather than one based on turnover.

RACING

MUSSELBURGH

12.30-1 ANTARCTIC SYSTEM (F Winslow) 11-2 Alfastra 5-1 3rd; Scatterbury 10-1, 14 min. Hd, 1/4. (R Fehey, Melton), John 1550; £150, £150, £200, OF: £2040, CSF: £2030, Trainer: J. Winslow

1.00-1 DOC RYANS (P McCabe) 6-1; 2. Steeler Jack 6-1; 3. Moonraker 16-1

11.15-20 WINDY BOSS (R Winslow) 11-2, 14 min. Hd, 1/4. (R Fehey, Melton), John 1550; £150, £150, £200, OF: £2040, CSF: £2030, Trainer: J. Winslow

2.30-1 OUTSET (J Carroll) 11-1; 2. Hera

2.30-10 STYLICIDE (P McCabe) 11-1, 17 min. Hd, 1/4. (R Fehey, Melton), John 1550; £150, £150, £200, OF: £2040, CSF: £2030, Trainer: J. Winslow

3.00-1 PUTER WENTWORTH (J Fortune) 9-2 to fav; 2. Tycoon Tint 5-1; 3.

Forza 2-1 to fav; 4. 9-2 fav West

minister 6-1, 6. Miss Gay Kennedy, accompanied by 7-1, 8. 9-2 fav Starlet, 9. 9-2 fav

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Holyfield's fighting spirit threatened by age concern

Evander Holyfield's re-match with Michael Moorer tomorrow may be one fight too far for a great heavyweight. Ken Jones reports from Las Vegas.

The way Evander Holyfield goes about his work in the ring is not beautiful or complicated, but each performance raises fresh admiration for a remarkable fighting spirit.

However, Holyfield's warrior instinct and realisation that he is still not identified as one of the great heavyweight champions could be a recipe for disaster.

Because so many of Holyfield's 36 professional contests, on top of the 174 he fought as an amateur, have fallen into the brutal category, his enthusiasm for the possibility of a unifying bout against the World Boxing Council champion

Leinox Lewis and another collision with Mike Tyson is worrying.

Lewis's trainer, Emanuel Steward, is not alone in thinking that Holyfield, who recently turned 35, should have gone into retirement last June after his second victory over Tyson. "Evander is running a big risk," Steward said this week. "It is always difficult persuading fighters to quit especially one so proud as this guy, but if he isn't careful we could have another Muhammad Ali tragedy. Of course, a unification contest suits our purpose but I'd hate to see it happen because Evander could get badly hurt. Lennox is simply too big and strong for him."

Almost exactly five years ago, the morning after Holyfield lost the undisputed championship to Rickie Bowe on a decision, I fell into conversation with his then trainer, Lou Duva. A hard fight, one of the best in recent heavyweight history, had been notable for the extent of

Holyfield's will, but there did not seem to be much of a future for him in boxing. "It's all over," Duva said. Together with other members of the family organisation, Duva was convinced that Holyfield would settle for the retirement they advised. "There's no point in him going on," Duva said.

"Evander got more money than he'll ever need and if he wants to stay involved in boxing we'll find a place for him in the organisation."

Choosing to ignore Duva's advice, Holyfield returned to the ring seven months later against a limited opponent, Alex Stewart. In winning a 12-round decision, he looked awful. People shook their heads and reflected on the fact that fighters are usually the last to know when time has run out for them.

When Holyfield signed to try and regain the World Boxing Organisation and International Boxing Federation belts from Bowe (the

champion had been stripped of the World Boxing Council championship for refusing to defend against Lewis) no hope was held out for him and it was feared that he would take a terrible beating.

A couple of nights before the contest at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas I came across Holyfield in a lift. It was quite late and he was with the lady, a doctor, he subsequently married. Holyfield smiled and said that all was well with him. The encounter persuaded me to believe that Holyfield was merely trying to prove something personally and would disappear permanently from boxing if Bowe again proved too much for him.

Instead, he defeated Bowe before figuring in events that eventually caused people to think again about where a man who has had three separate reigns as champion stood in the all-time heavyweight rankings.

The loss of his titles to Michael

Moorer figures as much in an assessment of Holyfield's status as the superiority he twice established over Tyson. Consequently, when Holyfield goes to his corner against Moorer tomorrow for the WBA and IBF titles they hold respectively, he will again have questions to answer. Was his defeat by the man from Detroit due to a shoulder injury or an undetected illness that led to concern, later removed, that he was suffering from a heart condition? Or was it simply that Holyfield could not overcome the difficulties posed by Moorer's southpaw stance?

For all his shortcomings that night, Holyfield is convinced that he did enough to win a close contest.

"The judges didn't see it that way," he said. "And I lost the titles. You can't erase what is in the record book so above all else this is an opportunity to redeem myself."

"The southpaw thing really wasn't that much of a problem. I just

wasn't myself in that fight." Holyfield was sitting on the apron of a ring in which he had gone three rounds with one of his four sparring partners. As usual he wore a serene expression. "When people ask how I could possibly have lost to Moorer, they should realise that a lot of things went on. I had injuries, especially in my shoulder, but I thought I could win without giving my all and didn't want to ask for a postponement. I allowed that to happen so I can't blame Moorer for my failure. When you lose it's your fault. There is no excuse."

If Holyfield's preparation for this contest has not been charged with the intensity that Tyson aroused, he is not taking Moorer lightly. "Tyson is a much stronger man than Moorer," he said. "If I choose I can push Michael into a position where he can be hit. Against Tyson, I could sit back and fight my fight because I knew he was going to be there."



Holyfield: Remains keen to meet Lewis and Tyson
Photograph: Reuter

With Michael being a little awkward, I will have to press things. I need to come out and set the tempo immediately."

What Holyfield must also do is think seriously about what the hardest and most dangerous of sports, one that should never be referred to as a game, might eventually do to him.

Llanelli still in awe of the legends of '72

Stradey Park's consecration as a rugby shrine was inspired by a single sporting miracle: Llanelli's defeat of Ian Kirkpatrick's All Blacks a quarter of a century ago. Tomorrow, the Scarlets will attempt a repeat performance against Sean Fitzpatrick's tourists.

Chris Hewett found the link between past and present in Gareth Jenkins, the current Llanelli coach who played himself into Welsh folklore back in 1972.

As the crow flies, Laugharne and Llanelli lie no more than a dozen miles apart on opposite sides of the River Tywi. If the former has its poet, Dylan Thomas, who famously reinvented his locality as Llaregub in Under Milk Wood, the latter is more earthy in its passion. It has its rugby club, by some distance the most celebrated sporting institution in Wales.

It is a measure of the esteem in which the Scarlets are held in these parts that rugby leaves literature for dead in hearts and minds of those who love both. Pay a visit to Brown's Hotel, Dylan's favourite Laugharne watering hole, and there, overshadowing umpteen pictures of

the wordsmith enjoying his umpteenth pint, you will see one enormous photograph of Delme Thomas and his 1972 Llanelli unforgettables. They were the side who saw off New Zealand and, in so doing, instigated a mass, day-long bender of such mighty excess that Thomas himself would have been forced to seek refuge at a health farm.

Gareth Jenkins was one of Delme's heroes. Then a lean, languid flank forward, and relatively inexperienced at 21, he tore into the All Blacks without fear or favour on that emotion-charged afternoon. Together with the likes of Derek Quinell and Tom David, he stopped a vaunted New Zealand pack in its tracks. Roy Bergers scored the only try of the game, Phil Bennett and Andy Hill kicked five points between them, and Llanelli sneaked it 9-3. Such is the stuff of legend.

Tomorrow Jenkins will watch from his coach's vantage point, just as the great Carwyn James did 25 years ago, as very different Scarlets side, less gifted than their forebears but no less enthusiastic, attempt a repeat of the unimaginable.

"I've got to take my memories out of the equation," Jenkins said this week. "I can't afford to get all misty-eyed and nostalgic about what happened in '72, even though it was one of the greatest rugby days anyone could have shared in. This is a special occasion in its own right and what I have to do is impress upon the players that



History men: Llanelli's Delme Thomas and Derek Quinell (centre) prepare to make the ball available during their side's victory over the All Blacks in 1972.

Photograph: Western Mail

they are about to play the hardest, most physical game they will ever encounter."

That detachment will not be easy for Jenkins, as he well knows. "The place is awash with nostalgia. Tonight, the club is hosting a black tie dinner for 800 people to mark the anniversary of the '72 game and, as far as I know, every one of the Scarlets who played that day will be there. The very fact that we are the one club side to be given a fixture with the All Blacks on this tour gives the

match an extra something and I suppose it is human nature to compare this to our day under Delme and Carwyn."

"But it's not comparable because you can't repeat history. You reflect on your past but live in the present and what gives tomorrow its unique flavour has more to do with what happens before. The way tours are these days, I can't see too many more opportunities arising for club sides to play the best. The game is changing and, to my mind,

there will be a sadness about tomorrow's game as well as a joy. It may be the end of something."

Llanelli know all about mixed emotions. Up until last month, when a desperate share issue finally raised sufficient cash to drive the financial wolf from the door, the Scarlets were playing their rugby under the threat of imminent bankruptcy.

The gloom was almost tangible as the Scarlets tried manfully to raise themselves for matches played in a morgue-like atmosphere at a three-quarters-

empty stadium and those gaps on the terraces spoke volumes.

Llanelli is, after all, proud of its

reputation as the most passionate rugby town in Britain.

"Our recent past has been well documented, and I don't want to dwell on it," Jenkins said. "Tomorrow, though, is what dreams are made of. It represents an opportunity for us to celebrate our emergence from all that financial pressure and to bold our heads high as a club with a future. I live in the town and am seen as a part of

it and people are definitely talking to me about Llanelli rugby with a genuine enthusiasm that perhaps wasn't there at the start of the season.

"As rugby people, we're obviously losing some of the qualities we once held dear. The short, Test-dominated nature of modern touring is symptomatic of that and some of the old camaraderie is going, no doubt about it. When I played, clubs were rugby-minded, out-hustling-minded, and the game belonged to everyone. In the

professional age, there are going to be victims. God knows, we were nearly one ourselves."

"But this sort of match is irresistible, the very essence of rugby, amateur or professional. Television has made this new generation of All Blacks more familiar to the average supporter than even the greatest names of the past and to have them here at Stradey, to see them and to face them in the flesh, is wonderfully exciting. You can't ask for anything better than the chance to play the best."

WHITBREAD ROUND THE WORLD RACE

Fright times ahead for the power generation

When the nine remaining yachts line up on the grid for the start of the second leg of the Whitbread Round the World Race tomorrow, the nerves of the 108 crew members will be as taut as any on a Formula One track.

However, as Stuart Alexander reports from Cape Town, the difference will be that, instead of knowing it will all be over in under two hours, these competitors will be lucky if they can relax at any time over the next two weeks.

The 4,600 miles through the roller coaster waves of the Southern Ocean to Fremantle have always been punishing ones. This time the horse-power boats can generate is greater, the stakes in terms of commercial sponsors and what they expect are higher.

the level of competition is tougher, and the reputations of some high-profile skippers are more exposed.

Risk management will be high on the agenda as predictions of new distance records are tempered by a need to avoid going too far. The first leg from Southampton has already shown that these 60ft thoroughbreds can be even more of a handful than had been forecast.

The power generated by a new generation of hulls and the sails which drive them means the boats are on the edge for more of the time. But the name of the game is also pushing things to the limit and this run to Australia is one of the two legs that can produce big gains or big losses.

One of the striking features of the pre-leg build-up here has been the amount of time spent by the crews on their masts. Many were repairing damage, though none came as close to major failure as Toshiba. Paul Standridge, who took over as skipper following the dramatic departure of Chris Dickson, found a four-inch crack about half-way up. "There was only

draining the physical demands can be, but this leg has the additional problem of the cold. Extra rations will be carried and much food eaten before the off.

Toshiba's Standridge has a lot to prove in the role he has always coveted as a Whitbread skipper. Who he arrived in Fremantle on the previous Whitbread, he was asked if at

anytime on a very hairy leg had been truly frightened. "No," came the classic reply. "It was much worse than that." Once again there will be frayed nerves as well as frayed kit.

WHITEBREAD ROUND THE WORLD RACE Standings after first leg: 1 EF Langman 125pts; 2 Merit Cup 110; 3 Innovative 100; 4 Amprail 90; 5 Crows 80; 6 Tropicana 72; 7 Toshiba 60; 8 Anadolu Cheleng 48; 9 Swedish Match 36; 10 EF Education 24; 11 Brunel Sunergy 12. *Andrew after first leg.

draining the physical demands can be, but this leg has the additional problem of the cold. Extra rations will be carried and much food eaten before the off.

There are a number of boats here in Cape Town who are only too aware of what they will have to do on the second leg. The mood around the race village is that bad results in the first leg must be rectified.

Although this leg is only half the distance of the first, it carries the same number of points. The priority is to be in the first three. This is not a cop out in advance for not winning the leg. Consistency is the name of the game – consistently high placings in all nine legs.

For Merit Cup, however, it is not a time to be taking chances – no death before dishonour. There's no point in blowing the boat apart, al-

though I sense some of our rivals may end up trying too hard. We managed to give the crew three days off last weekend, but overall, the pace has not slackened. The three weeks in Cape Town have been no holiday. We have repaired the broken gear, repaired the sails and we believe we start the leg fitter and stronger than before.

We have reviewed our sails, hopefully plugging the gap in our close reaching ability that became apparent on the first leg. I think Lawrie Smith put

his finger on it when he said Silk Cut and Merit Cup's sail inventories were too conservative. By that he meant that we lacked some of the specialist sails that operate at peak performance in a narrow band of wind angles and speed.

Some sails have very narrow operating peaks, but they can deliver a significant speed advantage; in some instances half a knot. That's a huge difference. Over 24 hours it's 12 miles and over 14 days it's 168 miles.

The withdrawal of America's Challenge because of cash problems has allowed us to add Jared Henderson to the crew. The second leg has fewer tactical choices for navigators. The first decision is how aggressively you dive south looking for the stronger westerlies. Then you have to decide how late you leave the push north to Fremantle.

No one will sail the shorter Great Circle route – it's too far north. The fleet will go further south to catch the stronger breeze but where the distance to sail is greater. The question is how far south.

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FOOTBALL

Newcastle balked by blunt front line

Barring mathematical improbabilities, Newcastle's Champions' League challenge ended with their 2-0 home defeat against PSV Eindhoven on Wednesday. Simon Turnbull gauges the muted reaction on Tyneside.

It is just as well that Kenny Dalglish knows that it's good to talk. Otherwise, the sound of silence would have been deafening at St James' Park late on Wednesday night.

Virtually en bloc, Dalglish's players turned defiantly deaf ears as they rushed through the

media interview area outside the main entrance. Only John Barnes was prepared to unseal his lips and answer a question.

"Obviously, we're very disappointed," Newcastle's stand-in captain said revealingly, without breaking stride.

It was left to Dalglish to do the talking, at the obligatory post-match press conference for the two managers. Asked if his team lacked focus up front, he said: "You've got to give credit to the lads who played. They gave everything for the cause."

It was the same in Bilbao three years ago when Newcastle's Uefa Cup "adventure," as Kevin Keegan called it, came to grief with Steve Watson, the then England Under 21 right-back, pressed into service as an

emergency stand-in for Andy Cole at centre-forward. And it was the same when Newcastle's Uefa Cup challenge petered out last season, with Robert Lee obliged to lead the attack again Monaco at St James'.

Three times in four seasons Newcastle have struck it unlucky with injury-stricken or suspended strikers in Europe. It did not help on Wednesday that they were also without the central midfield axis customarily provided by Lee and David Batty, but in the continuing absence of Faustino Asprilla and Alan Shearer they continued to look blunt at what ought to be their sharp end.

The players have sent the media to Coventry, in the metaphorical sense, because of what they perceive to have been unfair criticism in recent weeks. But on they themselves go to Coventry, in the physical sense, on Saturday with the Novocastrian natives becoming more than a little restless after a fifth match without a win.

Steve Wraith, who christened his famous *Number Nine* in honour of Newcastle's traditional centre-forward power, said: "The fans' patience is wearing thin. If we want to get back into the Champions' League next season we have to bring in a new striker now or we will have no chance of finishing first or second to qualify."

Asprilla, whose headed hat-trick launched Newcastle's Champions' League campaign with a memorable victory against Barcelona in September, is expected to be back in front-line action by the time the Toon Army visit the Nou Camp on 26 November. The Colombian might well soar to sublime heights against the Catalans once again, but it already seems the Magpies and their European ambitions have been grounded for another season.

Padovano deal collapses but Merson remains at Riverside

The Juventus striker Michele Padovano has turned down a move to Middlesbrough. Undeterred by the unhappy experience of taking Juve's Fabrizio Ravanelli to the Riverside, Bryan Robson, the Boro manager, negotiated a £1.6m fee but could not agree personal terms with the 30-year-old. Perhaps news travels fast in Italy...

Paul Merson will stay at the club, however, even if Middlesbrough fail to win promotion back to the Premiership. The £4.5m summer signing from Arsenal, who has been linked with clubs in the south, said: "It's flattering that clubs want me but Middlesbrough bought me and that's it."

John McGinlay has returned to the First Division. The Bolton striker yesterday became Bradford City's record signing in a £625,000 deal. The Scottish international signed a

two-and-a-half year contract, and will make his debut at Old Trafford tomorrow.

His new boss, the Bradford manager Chris Kamara, can be considered doubly fortunate since he has avoided punishment from the Football Association, despite being found guilty of misconduct after he was sent from the dug-out at Portsmouth last month.

Bournemouth's hopes of

signing permanently their Norwegian Under-21 International, Andreas Lundt, on loan from FK Molde rest with Wimbledon.

The Cherries have agreed terms with Molde for Lundt but the final decision lies with Molde's owners, who have a financial stake in Wimbledon.

The Premiership club have first refusal in the Norwegian club's players.

Andrew Martin

NON-LEAGUE NOTEBOOK

Good times return to Barrow

Halifax Town, the leaders of the GM Vauxhall Conference until they suffered their first league defeat of the season at Cheltenham last weekend, are not the only former Football League club in good form this campaign.

Barrow lost their League place in 1972 and were last in the Conference in 1992. After being replaced in the Fourth Division by Hereford it took them 12 years to taste success of any kind. They won the Northern Premier (now Uni-Bond) League in 1984 and again in 1989. The following year the FA Trophy was lifted at Wembley, but since then the

Cumbrian club have under-achieved.

Now, though, happy days are back at Holker Street. Barrow have an eight-point lead at the top of the Uni-Bond Premier Division, which they will extend into double figures if they win tomorrow at second-placed Boston United in non-League football's match of the day.

The top six attendances of the Premier Division season have all been at Holker Street. Barrow have kept nine clean sheets in 17 games while Neil Morton is among the league's leading scorers with 10 goals. Also, thanks partly to the money invested in the club by chairman Stephen Vaughan, a Liverpool businessman, key men have remained loyal to Barrow.

Dave Higgins, for many years a stalwart in the Tranmere Rovers defence until his release in the summer, rejected an opportunity to return to the League with Chester.

Of equal significance was

the decision of Barrow's manager, Owen Brown, the former Carlisle and Tranmere striker, to turn down an offer to take charge at Stafford Rangers. "I would have been better off financially going to Stafford," Brown said, "but I wanted to finish the job off at Barrow."

Rupert Metcalf

—

The Professional Cricketers' Association have been forced to arrange an Extraordinary General Meeting on 11 May after strong reservations were expressed regarding the England and Wales Cricket Board's decision on the future structure of the game at their first winter meeting.

GOLDEN JUBILEE QUADRANGULAR TOUR: South Africa beat Sri Lanka

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ENGLAND'S new hockey coach, the Australian Barry Dancer, was unhappy with his side's performance in Cairo yesterday, despite their 6-3 victory to lead the five-Test series 3-0. Dancer said: "It was a scrappy performance in which we lost midfield control but won the game."

After Russell Garcia had launched a good start with a penalty stroke conversion in the fourth minute, England lost their way, allowing Belal Ibrahim to score twice and put Egypt 2-1 ahead by the 11th minute.

As the teams struggled to get

midfield control, a move between Garcia and Justin Pricecock ended with Ben Sharpe putting England level in the 18th minute. Garcia and Calum Giles assured a 4-2 interval lead.

Sharpe's return from a temporary suspension in the 55th minute signalled the first of two further goals from Giles inside four minutes. With just two minutes remaining, Ibrahim completed his hat-trick.

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Ferguson faces Uefa censure as Irwin misses six weeks

Alex Ferguson's fury at the rugged tactics of Feyenoord on Wednesday is unlikely to subside in the light of news that Uefa could investigate the Manchester United manager's touchline confrontation with his Dutch counterpart on Wednesday. Guy Hodgson reports.

Anyone who has seen Alex Ferguson's anger take full flight will testify it is not a comfortable experience. Ruddy with rage, he

will put his face close to his target and vent his emotions with an explosion of words.

Geert Meijer, the caretaker coach of Feyenoord, would have got Ferguson on full power on Wednesday but for the intervention of United's assistant manager, Brian Kidd, who held his boss back from a potentially damaging confrontation.

Even with Kidd's moderating influence, Meijer appeared to spit his chewing gum at the United manager while Ferguson was furious at Feyenoord's vindictiveness which culminated in Denis Irwin being carried off with a knee injury eight minutes from the end of the English champions' 3-1 win.

Insinuating that Meijer lacked "principles", he described his thinking as "insane".

Irwin will be out for six weeks after Paul Boswell's tackle. The full-back had an X-ray on his left knee yesterday and will undergo further tests to assess the full extent of the damage and determine whether there is ligament damage.

Ferguson stopped his players exchanging shirts at the end of the match and condemned several other harsh challenges that included Gary Neville and Henning Berg being elbowed in the face. "The referee was in a very lenient mood," he said. "I think he could have given a couple of red cards."

All of which will be of interest to Uefa. But European football's governing body is bound to study reports from the referee, Hungary's Sandor Puh, Uefa delegate Herman Sellier, referee's observer Karin Inge Linboe and the fourth official, Attila Hanacek, before considering action. "Once we have seen them," a Uefa official confirmed, "we can decide whether there is anything we need to look at further."

What needed no confirmation was Ferguson's rage to succeed. At 56 (his birthday is New Year's Eve) and already certain of a listing among the great managers, some men would be seeking a quieter life. Not him. His will is the reason why his team get better. No player will get complacent while he can still be genuinely frightened by the anger of the man who picks the team.

And at the moment there seems to be little argument that United are getting better. Last season there was a feeling they won the Premiership almost by default, profiting from the failings of others, but this time they have struck the domestic front early, and are the only team in the Champions' League with a 100 per cent record.

When Ferguson did calm down enough to allow himself quiet satisfaction, he saw ample evidence in Rotterdam to get a yellow card.

No one has improved more dramatically than Andy Cole, although his machine-gun burst probably owes more to forgetfulness than learning. He has been shamed by a fear of failure, but stumbling upon some confidence has helped him

accrue eight goals in three matches. The man who found every way to miss suddenly does not know how to.

"We were a bit fortunate with the first goal," Ferguson said, "although it was a marvellous pass and Andy Cole's pace made it. He troubled them all night. He was always a threat."

As Cole is able to keep a striker of such rich promise as Ole Gunnar Solskjær on the substitutes' bench, yesterday's reports that United had inquired about the asking price of Dynamo Kiev's Andrei Shevchenko was just that - an idle inquiry. He could not play in the Champions' League this season anyway and only an

incorrigible gambler would pay £12m for a relatively untried striker, notwithstanding his hat-trick against Barcelona on Wednesday.

If Cole is becoming the fully-valued £7m man, then Ferguson has strength in depth in that department, just as he has an embarrassment of quality full-backs. Irwin, whose injury is less serious than was first feared, will miss United's match at Highbury on Sunday but his deputy is England's Phil Neville, while John Curtis and Michael Clegg are next in the queue.

Arsenal, United's nearest rivals but stuttering without Dennis Bergkamp, can only look and weep.

Kiev protest over poor treatment that backfired

When Barcelona subjected their Champions' League visitors, Dynamo Kiev, to shabby treatment this week, all they did was fire up the Ukrainians and sow the seeds of a disastrous defeat. Rostislav Khotin reports on the background to the Spaniards' elimination from Europe.

Dynamo Kiev have lodged a formal protest with Uefa over their treatment in Barcelona for Wednesday's European Cup Champions' League Group C encounter.

Training bust-up disrupts Celtic

Celtic's preparations for tomorrow's Old Firm game have been badly disrupted by a training ground bust-up between Joss McKinlay and the Swedish international striker, Henrik Larsson, yesterday.

The two clashed during a five-a-side game, with the incident apparently resulting in Larsson sustaining a bloody nose. It is understood that McKinlay, a Scottish international who has lost his place recently to the Frenchman,

Stéphane Mahé, immediately left the training ground without showering or getting changed.

Larsson later left the country bound for Sweden, but the club stressed that this had nothing to do with the incident at the training ground, but that he was going to attend the funeral of his father-in-law.

The Celtic general manager, Jock Brown, admitted an incident had taken place but insisted: "Morale in the camp could not be better."

"We showed will and character and have proved we can play as equals with the great names of European soccer," Lobanovsky said.

Indeed, denied full points from four games only by two late Newcastle United goals, Dynamo lead the group with 10 points, three ahead of PSV Eindhoven, who travel to Kiev for a potential group decider on 26 November.

Newcastle's striking deficiencies, page 29



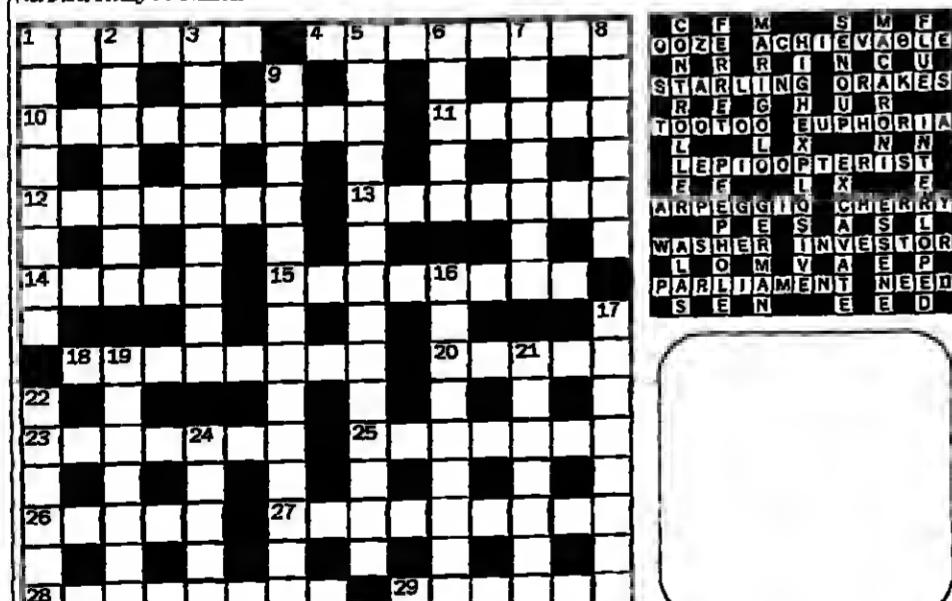
Barcelona's Rivaldo (right) attempts to avoid the close attentions of Oleg Luzny of Dynamo Kiev at the Nou Camp on Wednesday. Photograph: AFP

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3450, Friday 7 November

By Sparcus

Thursday's solution



- ACROSS
1 Clothworker making best of dodgy breakfast (6)
4 Zest for life - see it in Mediterranean country (8)
10 Ballet dancing also requires broad, level areas (9)
11 Take in dress, having got bigger? (5)
12 Pimpont changes to scale (7)
13 Welcome break especially needed in ceremonial observation? (7)
14 Poles entertained in bishop's office showing taste? (5)
15 Contracted to clothe king in purple and scarlet (8)
18 Reinforce lock following objection (8)
20 Small carnivore going after Channel Islands surgeon (5)

- DOWN
1 Upper-class gentleman originally wearing a sword (8)
2 River where Roman originally crossed over (7)
3 Swallow a little mud in river - medical attention needed (9)
5 Address just below round (5)
6 about, it's reported (8, 6)
7 One's required for audition, naturally (7)
8 American in Kenya, possibly heading east (6)
9 Untrifluous kids giving offence? (5, 9)
10 Row about policemen turning up outside Number Ten is a digression (9)
11 Loitering outside derelict multi, needing some sort of incentive (8)
12 Take a run through country in east - this one? (7)
21 Mountain girl's about to give us flowering plant (7)
22 Look thus, if upset? (6)
24 Endless depression associated with one dwelling in the far north? (5)

Saracens contemplate life without linchpin Lynagh

It has not been the best of weeks for Saracens. Seventy-two hours after confessing to operating losses of £2.2m, Watford's rugby kings are being forced to contemplate the unthinkable: Michael Lynagh's early retirement. Chris Hewett reports.

Michael Lynagh, the veteran World Cup-winning outside-half and still among the best three or four playmaking stand-offs in the game, will decide before Christmas whether to call time on his magnificent career.

If the 34-year-old Australian opt for pipe and slippers, his ambitious colleagues at Saracens - joint top of the Premiership - will be faced with a hole far bigger than the one blown in the bank account of their backer, Nigel Wray, by the seven-figure deficit revealed earlier this week.

Lynagh admitted last night that he was considering packing it in at the end of the season. "There comes a time when you have to say thanks very much and go and do something else," he told Sky's *Rugby Club*.

"I'm tossing up whether or not this will be my last season and I would like to decide before Christmas as to which way I'm going to go. There are people I have to talk to about it; I'm playing well and enjoying it and I feel we're going to

have a good season but maybe that's a good time to get out." Should Lynagh quit in May, he will have played only two of his three contracted seasons. It would leave Sarries with a major personnel problem, especially as they have their sights firmly fixed on a Heineken Cup place next year. Last season, their Heineken challenge started to peter out as soon as Lynagh began to struggle with injury and the European Cup is no place to be without a top-drawer performer in the No 10 shirt.

The fitness problems affecting two other front-line Sarries, Richard Hill and Kyran Bracken, were instrumental in persuading Clive Woodward, the England coach, to delay naming his squad for the Test with Australia tomorrow week and the Emerging England fixture with the All Blacks at Huddersfield three days later.

Both Hill, a prime candidate for the open-side flank, and Bracken, pushing hard at scrum-half, came through comeback matches against Cambridge University on Tuesday, but Woodward wants them watched at Northampton this weekend.

Both players are likely to feature prominently in this season's Five Nations' Championship, a hardy annual that will soon carry more financial clout than ever before as a result of a new sponsorship deal announced yesterday. Lloyds TSB will pay £1m to attach its name to the 1999 and 2000 tournaments and the group has secured an option for 2001 and beyond.

Argentina are to push for inclusion in the Tri-Nations series, following Italy's success in gaining admission to the Five Nations. The South Americans are concerned that they are becoming the poor relations of southern hemisphere rugby and will lobby influential delegates from New Zealand, Australia and South Africa at a conference in Buenos Aires this weekend.

Llanelli's legends, page 28

MORSE

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INSIDE
TODAY

New York
ways to
you buy,
page 20

TODAY

One-stop

One-stop
The Government
vote on
ballot paper
can from 1998

Rwanda

A Rwandan
rape and
been set
with data
on

Call for

The controversial
Formula One racing
take for an offside
leaving laboratories
Labour force. Page

Government. Page

Raspberry

Some of the top
embarrassed
awards - the
portrayal of blood

the Eye, page 2